

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 83rd AUTUMN DELEGATE MEETING
HELD ON 10th and 11th OCTOBER, 1987

(To be read in conjunction with the EC Report and Appendix Report to ADM and
the Agenda for ADM)

<u>ATTENDANCES:</u>	<u>No. of Branches Represented</u>	<u>No. of Delegates Sitting</u>	<u>Branches Not Represented</u>
Saturday 10th October 1.25 pm	15	26	Birmingham, Bolton, Dundee, Lancaster and Seaham, Glasgow, Edinburgh
Saturday 10th October 3.30 pm	19	33	Dundee, Edinburgh and Seaham
Sunday 11th October 10.45am	18	28	Birmingham, Edinburgh, Enfield & Harringey, Seaham
Sunday 11th October 3.00pm	19	29	Birmingham, Edinburgh, Seaham

FINANCIAL REPORT:

<u>Income</u>	<u>£</u>
Collections: Saturday	39.66
Sunday	51.12

SATURDAY: There was one nomination for the Chair - Com. G. Slapper by Guildford Br. seconded by Birmingham Br. Votes: 12 for 0 against. Carried. It was agreed not to elect a Deputy Chairman. It was agreed Standing Orders Committee act as Tellers. Chairman suggested arrangement of order in which business to be taken: that we run through the Agenda 1 through to 5 and that we use this as the running order and take the Report of the EC in conjunction with this Agenda, that is the EC Report be split into the separate Report of the Committee and the suggestion I would make is this: EC, Party Officers and Administration.

Agenda Item 4

Standing Orders Committee Roll Call.

Birmingham None, Bolton None, Bournemouth 2, Bristol 2, Camden 2, Dundee None, E. London 1, Eccles 2, Edinburgh None, Enfield and Harringey 1, Glasgow None, Guildford 2, Islington None yet (late with Form C), Lancaster None, Manchester None, Merseyside 2, Newcastle 1, NW London 2, Seham None, SW London 2, Swansea 2, W London 1, Yorkshire 1.

Page 5 of EC Report. Failure to send Forms C. Manchester Branch and Islington Br. sent letter of explanation but no letter from Seham. Islington Br. letter dated 22nd September reads: "At its 17th September Meeting Carried 17 - Nil, 17 present: 'That the Branch Secretary writes to the EC apologising for the delay in submitting Form C - unavoidable circumstances. Branch Auditors now dealing with the matter of extreme urgency.' Fraternally Duncan Secretary." Four Brs. not sitting with a delegation. Have Manchester sent in a Form C now? Too late for any appendix or Master Form C. There is no copy. Moved and seconded: "That Manchester and Islington be allowed." Agreed. General

Secretary was satisfied that they sit. It was asked that the General Secretary circulate the details of the Manchester letter. Edinburgh and Seaham. No comment. Not sitting.

Agenda Item 6 Any matters placed before the Meeting by the EC. Standing Orders Committee asked about a Special Meeting. Agreed to be left to Any other business.

Agenda Item 1. Islington Br. suggested that 1A be taken from the first, last of all. Guildford Br. suggested verbal submission from the ad hoc Committee on Planning and Strategy to be dealt with in conjunction. Bournemouth It would be far better to leave it to the end when other Brs. here. Resolution: "That 1A be postponed to the last item." Votes: 10 for, 9 against. Carried.

Agenda 1B

Report of Standing Orders Committee at 1.25 p.m. 26 Delegates sitting. Not represented Birmingham, Bolton, Dundee, Lancaster and Seaham.

Marcello (Bristol). Many new members know nothing of the work of the Committees. Handbook could suggest activities that members of Central Branch can do. How to sell the SS and hold meetings. Some members have a lot of knowledge. This would encourage members to be more active than they are now.

Agenda 1C. Hammersmith Br. Resolution agreed straight into. Agreed that 1C be postponed.

J. Percy-Smith (Yorkshire). At recent week end school organised by Bolton precisely this suggestion came up and there was informal decision that something should be produced. I believe Central Organiser also there, would co-ordinate something. It is a good idea and so far as I know something is in progress to produce something.

Coleman (Central Organiser). It is a good idea. Should have been done long ago. I am going to produce this as a draft and pass it on. It is a practical suggestion which ought to be done. All new members should have it in their hands.

Enfield and Harringey Br. Obviously a good idea. Over many years our Br. have produced copies of the Standard which are important theorywise. Also produced a leaflet giving advice to sympathisers and new members on what they might be able to do to assist the Party. Such a handbook probably falls into about five different divisions. First of all it needs to be a general introduction telling new members about the structure of the Party and how it operates and then another section beginning with the practice of the Party and how it goes about its business, propaganda and so forth and then another section needs to be devoted to basic theory, and of course most of this can come from articles in the Standard. We produced about thirty to fifty different articles in A⁴ form which we have handy for new members and sympathisers, which probably saved us about five years rooting around trying to find. Then we need something to show how can get access to the library, SS and so forth. It is not so much a question that we are teaching people and passing information on to them we have learned from other people. When Friends of the Earth get new members they are divided up into quite a number of different groups to deal with different questions, like acid rain, rain forests, local environment questions and all sorts of questions. They have little groups and committees. They make certain that people come into the organisation, they make sure they have something to do and can use their aptitude, skills and training for the benefit of the organisation.

McColl (Bournemouth). With the business of the new handbook I do not think all theories is a good idea. I thought it was to give information to new members. I think to get round to theory, explain how the Committees work, how the ADM and the Conference work and give people a chance to feel they are a part of the Party.

Cottis (E. London). My Br. saw no merit in this idea of a new handbook for new members. It is the Br. opinion. What is there to know? Harringey propose to use it for new members and sympathisers - this puts a different complexion on it. My Br. only concerned with a handbook for new members.

Preston (Eccles). There has been something I got from Islington three years ago. How the Party works. For incoming members - what is happening in the Party, why it is happening and what they should be doing about it. We do not want anything airy-fairy, we want something people can get in their hands and understand.

1 B Floor Resolution: Moved Lawrence, seconded Hart (SW London): "This ADM endorses the idea of the Party having a handbook."

Bennett (Manchester). No reason why the distribution of such handbook should not be limited to new members.

P. Lawrence (SW London). I do recall that this proposition was put forward in the Party some years ago. We had a long discussion at ADM, all endorsed and then nothing happened. Technically that decision is still on the table.

Now we have two members keen to write the handbook. So let's get on with it.

J. Howell (Guildford). I think the idea is an excellent one but it becomes clear there is some discussion as to what should go in it. We think it should be a technical handbook and not be confused with theory and propaganda, which should be the New Pamphlets Committee. We should in the course of this proposal decide what the handbook is to be limited to and not to have it as a 'catch all' publication.

S. Coleman (Central Organiser). I hope, Comrade Chairman, that the EC will make it clear who they want to do it.

ADENDUM: By Graham and Marcello (Bristol): "and recommends the Central Organiser to produce a draft to be considered by Brs. before next Conference." Graham. It seems to us appropriate Brs. should see it before it goes into production.

L. Cox (EC member). I think the majority of the EC will support wholeheartedly. It was mooted years ago and in default of anyone volunteering not produced. I embrace wholeheartedly suggestion from Com. Graham - should go to Brs. for consideration. What do we do when Brs. write back and say: 'We think this should be amended in this way.' ? Who should be in the end responsible for compiling a final version based on the suggestions from Brs.? You should specify who should have ultimate responsibility to collate and incorporate suggestions from the Brs.

P. Lawrence (SW London). Would like to oppose the addendum. I think it will cause unnecessary delay. I cannot see anything in the addendum to justify delay. The procedure of delaying it to next Conference, it will take the heat out of the suggestion. When you have members keen to do it I think you should give them their heads.

Bournemouth Br. Wind up. If we have been waiting around for several years another few months will not hurt. It is right that members should have a chance to make their comments. The handbook should reflect what the members want. Mover to sum up. Mover did not want to wind up.

ADENDUM: Votes: 7 for, 11 against. LOST

SECOND ADENDUM. J. Howell (Guildford): "That the handbook be limited to procedural rather than theory or propaganda matters."

To close. It is intended to limit the front end. There is a difference between talking about propaganda and how you get into it. This is a technical pamphlet and one that we think will have a very long print run.

Vote on Second Addendum: 7 for, 9 against. Addendum LOST.

Floor Resolution. Votes: 22 for, 1 against. Carried.

Agenda Item 1 C. A. Buick (W London). Branch takes the view that in the Party in recent years there has been basically a healthy move towards de-centralisation. Has it gone too far in recent years? The Party needs to consider

Cottis (E. London). My Br. saw no merit in this idea of a new handbook for new members. It is the Br. opinion. What is there to know? Harringey propose to use it for new members and sympathisers - this puts a different complexion on it. My Br. only concerned with a handbook for new members.

Preston (Eccles). There has been something I got from Islington three years ago. How the Party works. For incoming members - what is happening in the Party, why it is happening and what they should be doing about it. We do not want anything airy-fairy, we want something people can get in their hands and understand.

1 B Floor Resolution: Moved Lawrence, seconded Hart (SW London): "This ADM endorses the idea of the Party having a handbook."

Bennett (Manchester). No reason why the distribution of such handbook should not be limited to new members.

P. Lawrence (SW London). I do recall that this proposition was put forward in the Party some years ago. We had a long discussion at ADM, all endorsed and then nothing happened. Technically that decision is still on the table. Now we have two members keen to write the handbook. So let's get on with it.

J. Howell (Guildford). I think the idea is an excellent one but it becomes clear there is some discussion as to what should go in it. We think it should be a technical handbook and not be confused with theory and propaganda, which should be the New Pamphlets Committee. We should in the course of this proposal decide what the handbook is to be limited to and not to have it as a 'catch all' publication.

S. Coleman (Central Organiser). I hope, Comrade Chairman, that the EC will make it clear who they want to do it.

ADDENDUM: By Graham and Marcello (Bristol): "and recommends the Central Organiser to produce a draft to be considered by Brs. before next Conference."

Graham. It seems to us appropriate Brs. should see it before it goes into production.

L. Cox (EC member). I think the majority of the EC will support wholeheartedly. It was mooted years ago and in default of anyone volunteering not produced. I embrace wholeheartedly suggestion from Com. Graham - should go to Brs. for consideration. What do we do when Brs. write back and say: 'We think this should be amended in this way.'? Who should be in the end responsible for compiling a final version based on the suggestions from Brs.? You should specify who should have ultimate responsibility to collate and incorporate suggestions from the Brs.

P. Lawrence (SW London). Would like to oppose the addendum. I think it will cause unnecessary delay. I cannot see anything in the addendum to justify delay. The procedure of delaying it to next Conference, it will take the heat out of the suggestion. When you have members keen to do it I think you should give them their heads.

Bournemouth Br. Wind up. If we have been waiting around for several years another few months will not hurt. It is right that members should have a chance to make their comments. The handbook should reflect what the members want. Mover to sum up. Mover did not want to wind up.

ADDENDUM: Votes: 7 for, 11 against. LOST

SECOND ADDENDUM. J. Howell (Guildford): "That the handbook be limited to procedural rather than theory or propaganda matters."

To close. It is intended to limit the front end. There is a difference between talking about propaganda and how you get into it. This is a technical pamphlet and one that we think will have a very long print run.

Vote on Second Addendum: 7 for, 9 against. Addendum LOST.

Floor Resolution. Votes: 22 for, 1 against. Carried.

Agenda Item 1 C. A. Buick (W London). Branch takes the view that in the Party in recent years there has been basically a healthy move towards de-centralisation. Has it gone too far in recent years? The Party needs to consider

whether or not some excesses have not resulted from the fact that in the last General Election the manifesto was not approved by the EC. This manifesto is saying that the workers are mugs. Minor excesses will have arisen. What we want to do is to get a debate going as to whether this decentralisation has not gone too far so far as producing manifestos for national elections. So far as we can see EC itself had no part to play except to pay for it.

S. Coleman (Islington). Two points to be made about what Com. Buick has said. We completely agree EC ought to approve manifesto. We accept basic point that if you are producing a manifesto the EC should approve it. Secondly, Com. Buick has abused his position as a delegate. This is not about the content of the manifesto. Should it be the case that you sent the manifesto to be edited by the EC?

C. May (NW London). The Branch concerned happy with the election manifesto. When we asked the EC why they did not read the draft manifesto the EC passed the following Resolution and I quote: "The EC understands that the Parliamentary Committee should have been concerned in the preparation of the Islington election manifesto according to Clause 4 of its terms of reference: 'In conjunction with the SSPC to be responsible for the prompt preparation of an election manifesto and any other necessary election literature when an election is likely to arise.'" When we asked the EC why the Object of the Party had been omitted from the manifesto we were advised that the Object had been omitted as a regrettable oversight. No member of the EC raised the question of the omission of the Object. The EC are shelving their responsibility. If they saw no reason to take a direct part in editing the manifesto - of which I understand 40,000 were printed, our election manifesto printed in far greater quantities than anything else we put out - the EC have been negligent, shelled their responsibilities, and I think it is up to this ADM to put a message: That manifestos go to the EC for reading, discussion and possible alteration.

Janie P-S (NPC). From the point of view of a member of the New Pamphlets Cttee. To clarify a few points. Islington manifesto was submitted to NPC and vetted. It was returned to Islington Br. for printing. The layout is up to the Branch and the Print Cttee. We do not think it has not been traditionally our function to proscribe that. There were two drafts of manifestos which were circulating. The NPC agreed and added Islington draft. It was then apparent Parliamentary Cttee intend to produce a draft manifesto. Prior to that one of the members of the Parliamentary Cttee phoned me and I questioned whether we wanted a second manifesto. Argument put to me that in addition to the manifesto for Islington it was felt other Brs. might want to circulate some sort of manifesto. The EC did not throw out the Islington draft. The NPC saw that and edited it. As we are responsible for leaflets it was under those terms of reference that we edited it. It may be that is in conflict with the Parliamentary Cttee.

Agenda Item 1 C.

H. Moss (Swansea). The view Swansea Br. took on this was that the election manifestos Brs. may want to use for local or national elections are not entirely different from other leaflets and communications of that description which the Party would want to issue and since the Party Rules say that the Pamphlets Committee have the authority to edit leaflets produced by Brs. the view Swansea Br. takes is that leaflets which are election manifestos have no different status from other leaflets.

S. Coleman (Islington). It was a regrettable oversight. I was in touch with Calverts and once layout of the text decided I told them to put on the D of P and when we talk about "D of P" we also mean Object. They must have misunderstood it and they just put the D of P and omitted the Object. I have to apologise to ADM for it.

L. Cox (W London). The EC was in some difficulty, as you know, as Com. May read out.

Camden produc
We tho had go
NPC to K. A. i
decentr reorgan
the EC worried
EC shou these C
I hope ; think el
FLOOR RE in the f connecte
L. Cox (P. Lawre
isati
literatu between]
the Party we would
the Party EC works
That is w by recent
where the etc., par
in public NPC. Ulti
in the har
situation. material e
Janie P-S hold of th
most of th
Cttee were
wanted. I
with someti
Executive (and get rai
We are not C. May (NW
and an elec
over all fo
not ask to S. Coleman
but let's g J. Howell (we mean by
in danger of their electi
to do it wit Graham (Bris

Camden Br. In the opinion of this Br. the EC were responsible for the production of the election manifesto and we deprecate that they failed. We thought it was a local election leaflet. We hoped it had been vetted and had gone through the procedures. We can now bring in the services of the NPC to vet it.

K. A. Knight (W London). The most crucial points. He made the point that decentralisation in the Party may have gone too far. If we are going to reorganise the Party to me the speed and making it the more relevant. Asked the EC to clarify. I think decentralisation is going too far. I have been worried about it for several years. They are not sub-Cttees of the EC. The EC should be controlling and watching and if the EC does not get reports from these Cttees as to what is going on does it mean the EC got in touch with them? I hope you will refer this matter to the EC and ask them to clarify how they think elections, general and local, should be operated in the Party.

FLOOR RESOLUTION. Read out: "This ADM recommends that all election manifestos in the future be referred to the EC as well as any other Cttees which are connected with leaflets, etc."

L. Cox (SW London). Does that include local election statements?

P. Lawrence (SW London). There has been some mention of central or decentralisation. It is not so much decentralisation as a concentration of Party literature into fewer hands. Our Br. very much opposed to that. Distinction between leaflet and manifesto a bit thin. This was a general statement about the Party's aims in a general election and we would call that a manifesto and we would also say that a manifesto is one of the most important statements the Party can make. So therefore our Br. stands by the procedure where the EC works in co-operation certainly with the Br. and the Parliamentary Cttee. That is what we think should have happened in this case. If this is obscure by recent Conference resolutions that may be the case. We should get back to where there is much more involvement in the production of these manifestos, etc., particularly where it involves the EC being able to discuss the issues in public in conjunction with these other things. The final arbiters were the NPC. Ultimate control for the pamphlets and all election material now rests in the hands of three members of the Br. This is a totally intolerable situation. Let's take the thing from there and in the future have all election material edited by the EC.

Janie P-S (NPC). I just want to respond to this idea that somehow NPC has hold of the Party pamphlets and leaflets and I think it should be made plain most of the time we are editing texts put to us by Brs. Some members of the Cttee were not entirely happy with the text. That was the type Islington Br. wanted. If we had written the text ourselves probably we would have come out with something quite different. The NPC is accountable as a sub-Cttee of the Executive Cttee, so the EC can ask the NPC what it is doing about something and get rapid response. The NPC is accountable to the ADM and the Conference. We are not exceeding our powers.

C. May (NW London). What is the difference between an election communication and an election manifesto? I think it says in the Rules the EC are responsible over all for the publication of Party literature. It surprises me the EC did not ask to see what was going out.

S. Coleman (Islington). We support this move. I support the floor resolution but let's get the thing into proportion.

J. Howell (Guildford). I do think it is going to be necessary to clarify what we mean by manifestos. Discussion stems from a lot of disagreement. We are in danger of having a very well meaning Cttee from a Br., lots of energy in their election work. It is not an easy matter and I think we have just got to do it with a bit of bureaucracy.

Graham (Bristol Br.). Bristol delegates instructed to make two points on the

general item. One, we are instructed to protest if the general item was used for recriminations about one particular item in the past. Second point, Br. thought the present way of proceeding was obscure. We thought they should be draft to the NPC for checking. From personal experience over four years as General Secretary I saw time taken to consider. I shall be voting against the floor resolution.

H. Moss (Swansea). Some members may not have liked the contents of the leaflets but some members will not like any leaflets produced.

P. Lawrence (SW London). We support this resolution. It is directly in line with our Br. instructions. NPC has even less members. In the EC's I was involved in in the recent two or three years we had no problem. We got leaflets out very fast, faster than the NPC could deal with. Priority first thing after Minutes. Finished and it went back. All done in open discussion. Not possible with NPC with members all over the country. They cannot sit down as a body and discuss the thing. Sending it to the EC is a far superior method.

C. May did not wish to sum up. Mover quoted resolution.

P. Lawrence (SW London). Wished to move amendment: Delete the word "leaflets" and insert "such election material." NO seconder.

Chairman. We move directly to vote. Votes: 9 for, 13 against. LOST.

REPORTS

General Secretary. Page 6 of EC Report

Janie P-S (Yorkshire). General point about Reports. When we went through the Agenda at the Br. we considered the Reports and the questions from the Br. that they wanted delegates to raise. Of course I cannot respond except on a personal level.

General Secretary - Nil. Treasurer - Nil.

Legacies Cttee.

C. McColl (Bournemouth). What kind of money are we looking at for the house in Derby? Treasurer said value for Probate at between £18,000 and £20,000.

C. McColl jokingly said his Br. would scale down their propaganda accordingly. Bristol Branch asked about pamphlet on Russia.

H. Moss (Swansea). We normally consider that if a Br. had a suggestion or an idea the best thing to write to the NPC and we would give our response and if the Br. concerned was then unsatisfied it could then go to the ADM or Conference. We have a list of pamphlets projected and one of them is on Russia - not a collection of articles in the SS. We have not had a leaflet on education in recent times. If any member is prepared to supply a draft we would be pleased to consider it. Do members of Brs. think education is something we should be looking into urgently?

B. Johnson (Swansea) but from the floor. New pamphlet in the process of production on racialism. Discrimination is not a one way process.

Discrimination takes place between black and black, white and white. I was asked to give my observations on the new pamphlet.

Janie P-S (NPC). I think it is unfair to say that the pamphlet is dealing only with racialism against black people. There is a section on Irish, second anti-semitism. We are talking about various aspects of racialism in the pamphlet. I think what comes out very clearly is we are seeing racism is a changing phenomenon, different people get scapegoated at different times in history. There is the migration of workers. Had reference to racism in other parts of the world. Contemporary distinction in Britain is against black. It is not the only emphasis in the pamphlet.

C. Begley (Publicity Cttee). There is other work going on in the Publicity Cttee. In the future what we intend doing is that regards pamphlets, new racialist pamphlet, would get in touch with minority ethnic groups to review. We would be getting in touch with courses in Universities and

general item. One, we are instructed to protest if the general item was used for recriminations about one particular item in the past. Second point, Br. thought the present way of proceeding was obscure. We thought they should be draft to the NPC for checking. From personal experience over four years as General Secretary I saw time taken to consider. I shall be voting against the floor resolution.

H. Moss (Swansea). Some members may not have liked the contents of the leaflets but some members will not like any leaflets produced.

P. Lawrence (SW London). We support this resolution. It is directly in line with our Br. instructions. NPC has even less members. In the EC's I was involved in in the recent two or three years we had no problem. We got leaflets out very fast, faster than the NPC could deal with. Priority first thing after Minutes. Finished and it went back. All done in open discussion. Not possible with NPC with members all over the country. They cannot sit down as a body and discuss the thing. Sending it to the EC is a far superior method.

C. May did not wish to sum up. Mover quoted resolution.

P. Lawrence (SW London). Wished to move amendment: Delete the word "leaflets" and insert "such election material." NO seconder.

Chairman. We move directly to vote. Votes: 9 for, 13 against. LOST.
REPORTS

General Secretary. Page 6 of EC Report

Janie P-S (Yorkshire). General point about Reports. When we went through the Agenda at the Br. we considered the Reports and the questions from the Br. that they wanted delegates to raise. Of course I cannot respond except on a personal level.

General Secretary - Nil. Treasurer - Nil.

Legacies Cttee.

C. McColl (Bournemouth). What kind of money are we looking at for the house in Derby? Treasurer said value for Probate at between £18,000 and £20,000. C. McColl jokingly said his Br. would scale down their propaganda accordingly.

Bristol Branch asked about pamphlet on Russia.

H. Moss (Swansea). We normally consider that if a Br. had a suggestion or an idea the best thing to write to the NPC and we would give our response and if the Br. concerned was then unsatisfied it could then go to the ADM or Conference. We have a list of pamphlets projected and one of them is on Russia - not a collection of articles in the SS. We have not had a leaflet on education in recent times. If any member is prepared to supply a draft we would be pleased to consider it. Do members of Brs. think education is something we should be looking into urgently?

B. Johnson (Swansea) but from the floor. New pamphlet in the process of production on racialism. Discrimination is not a one way process.

Discrimination takes place between black and black, white and white. I was asked to give my observations on the new pamphlet.

Janie P-S (NPC). I think it is unfair to say that the pamphlet is dealing only with racialism against black people. There is a section on Irish, second anti-semitism. We are talking about various aspects of racialism in the pamphlet. I think what comes out very clearly is we are seeing racism is a changing phenomenon, different people get scapegoated at different times in history. There is the migration of workers. Had reference to racism in other parts of the world. Contemporary distinction in Britain is against black. It is not the only emphasis in the pamphlet.

C. Begley (Publicity Cttee). There is other work going on in the Publicity Cttee. In the future what we intend doing is that regards pamphlets, new racialist pamphlet, would get in touch with minority ethnic groups to review. We would be getting in touch with courses in Universities and

Colleges. We do have enquiries here at HO for literature. The enquirer puts down whatever he wants to put down, whether he wants to be put in touch with Brs. We had 1% response. We thought it was better if the enquirer stipulates that he is interested in Party information, and if Brs. are interested in getting hold of these names would they get in touch with Com. Begley.

Bennett (Manchester). Question of Publicity top of Page 9

Publicity Cttee (Guardian adverts). If Brs. want to advertise their lectures and meetings direct they still get the contract rate of £1.28 per line.

Media Cttee member. Unfortunately no further radio broadcasts have taken place. A few weeks ago a radio broadcast did take place on behalf of the Party on LBC Radio and in fact full details have just been sent to the EC. Resulted from the SS. We did have a full hour phone-in. Radio man said heard by 250,000 listeners. Great range of calls came in. Indifferent calls favourable. Party's name mentioned several times. SS and Freepost announced. Several enquiries have come in. This was about the tenth radio broadcast we have had in the past six years on LBC Radio.

ROLL CALL

Birmingham None, Bolton 2, Bournemouth 2, Bristol 2, Camden 2, Dundee None, E London 1, Eccles 2, Edinburgh None, Enfield and Harringey 1, Glasgow 1, Guildford 2, Islington 2, Lancaster 2, Manchester 1, Merseyside 2, Newcastle 1, NW London 2, Seaham None, SW London 2, Swansea 2, W London 1, Yorkshire 1.

S. Dowsett (Islington). We should consider regularly holding Press Conferences, Chernobyl disaster, etc. A Press Conference and we might well have got attendances and some publicity regarding that incident. Other organisations do it and it is high time this was documented and given to the Media Cttee to look into in the future.

Agenda Item 2.

H. Moss (Swansea). Would not Letters Page without Editorial Replies encourage more letters from members and non-members? Not intended as a criticism. Letters procedure adopting method they have inherited. One of the consequences, we think, is that the SS does not get many letters or not many letters are published. Often the reply considerably longer than the letter itself. I do not think members or otherwise, after two or three lines of the reply, get very much further. Members of Swansea think pages could be more attractive if did not give detailed replies. We all agree that when we open a newspaper or a journal one of the first things we look at is the Letters Page. You could peruse quite quickly because usually quite brief. Not so with the SS. We feel one of the reasons SS does not get many letters suitable for publication because people not inclined to write because they are going to be told they are wrong, the point they make is incorrect. We think a page without replies would encourage people to buy. The fact of not having Replies is likely to leave the field open to other correspondence. I quite often reply to other letters. If somebody already replied I would be less likely to reply myself. If members think should be replied to they can reply themselves. If members think should be given they can get a member to reply in another issue. More dynamic way of going about things. We may be wrong but we do not know if we do not try. If there is reasonable amount of approval on this amongst delegates what we would like to suggest is that this be given a try for, say, six months. See if members think more lively and gives rise to a better, more stimulating journal.

C. McColl (Bournemouth). Branch discussed this and felt opposed very strongly, I read the old 1970 Standards, I used to read the letters.

Cottis (E London). We were of the opinion that to do this would open the

floodgates to every kind of criticism and every kind of puerile lefty ideas. We see a danger in that. Our reaction was immediate opposition. S. Coleman (Islington). We are a propaganda journal. At the moment we are only out once a month. Com. Moss suggests lively interchange of ideas. We only come out once a month. We should leave no point unanswered. This is a reputation we should keep. We should underline every point in error and take it to pieces. If they are capable of taking it they will come out of it. We should put full and comprehensive reply.

J. Bradley (Enfield and Harringey). We agree with what Comrade from Islington said. There is great value on the educational field for new members who can go back to Standards which deal with topics in a comprehensive way. As regards attracting people to writing in, what really matters is the actual tone of the reply. However long an answer may be if the tone of the reply is reasonably friendly although it expresses opposition to point people make it is the tone of reply that encourages. A short answer if at all possible, and then the more comprehensive answer. There is no real problem and it is extremely important that we continue with our present practice.

Bristol Br. member. Firstly Editors should never reply but leave this to members and other readers. Replies should be kept to a reasonable length but should be made. Editors should reply but not feel bound to do so. To every point. Aggressive tone should be avoided.

Donnelly (Glasgow). Letters do not appear because people do not see it. I understand complaint not enough letters and not lively enough. Should be opposed to anyone replying.

C. May (NW London). Asked for SSPC to tell us how many letters they get each month from readers.

Janie P-S (SSPC). Some articles attract more letters. We get up to about ten letters per month.

C. May (NW London). I assume some letters replied to privately? NW London opposed to proposition put forward by Swansea. Letter writers know they will not get the last word. It is our journal. We get the last word.

Janie P-S (SSPC). We would write a reply ourselves. If we did not feel competent we would ask another member.

K. A. Knight (W London). I suspect number of letters we get relates to circulation. There is assumption we will get more letters. I am not really keen on a Comrade answering, as then Comrades will reply to them. We want to maintain the Party's answer. The SSPC is answering for us, giving our definitive answer.

B. Johnson (Swansea). This has been tried in the past, in the Fifties I think it was. I do not know the result but I do know it is a fact that the Editorial Cttee did take up a stance of not replying. It might have been over a six months period. I do not know the result.

H. McLaughlin (Birmingham). When we discussed this we did not go along with everything by Swansea. The Editorial Cttee sometimes go over the top. They sometimes give lengthy replies to short letters. The Party answers workers questions. We are saying some letters do not need much of a reply. You have basically sympathetic letter, and not from a member, so it goes in as a letter. SSPC do not always reply.

P. Lawrence (SW London). We are opposed to this proposition by Swansea. I have written two letters to "The Guardian", one on Chernobyl. I did not even get a reply. If that had been the Standard I would have got a reply if it was socialist or not.

Buick (W London). Most members of the Br. were in favour of the proposition put forward by Swansea but only on an experimental basis for six months or something like that. I should say there was a letter put in the Standard.

couple of months ago which had two lines as a reply. I wrote to the person who wrote the letter and his reaction to this two line reply is irrelevant to this debate. The rather short reply was disappointment. He took the fact that we did not reply as running away from his criticism.

C. McColl (Bournemouth). In the Standard of September letter from Jenkins, Swansea. What is the policy of the Editors if somebody writes in and got a disagreement? Is the name forwarded to local Br.?

Janie P-S (SSPC). The practice of the Cttee is that if people write a letter to the Standard I personally do not think it is necessarily proper to hand over their address to the Br. It may not be what they want. There are details of the Brs. in the Standard so they can get in touch with the Br. We have to be careful who we hand addresses to. Just because we have address of person in Swansea they would not necessarily be pleased if we handed them over to the Br.

J. Howell (Personally). Not speaking as delegate. Guildford Br. are in favour of extending the Letters Page. Of course the Standard is to promote Party propaganda. Perhaps a majority do not regard it as very interesting as it is presented at the moment. I think there is evidence that letters pages are read. It may be Com. May does not find interest in letters in "The Guardian." I do not think "The Guardian" will spend a lot of money printing letters. We have to give a reply. There is something to be said for Cttee members giving replies. Remember we have got to make it as interesting as possible. Variety is one of the main ingredients of that interest. Every square inch has to be paid for. Because Letters Page does not have deadline problems of most of the production Letters Page can be dealt with over a period of a month and we can print that for insertion as they sell them.

Items 9 and 10 of the Report

4 pm. Report of the Standing Orders Cttee at 3.30 pm 33 delegates sitting. Brs. not represented - Dundee, Edinburgh and Seaham.

COLLECTION taken up

Graham (Bristol Br.). The tone is more important than a short or long reply. Take the current letter from the member of the Green Party.

Janie P-S (SSPC). I am the only member of the SSPC present and I should convey apologies from Com. Skinner, who will be here tomorrow. I am the only member here from Yorkshire Br. Yorkshire Br. in discussing this said they were in favour of present practice. No good having replies a month later when they would not be on the page. We are in favour of a break in traditional practice. We should have an option. At present there is an expectation that we do reply to all letters. Recent two line reply was a break with tradition. So we would like to feel that we have discretion not to reply if not appropriate or to reply if it is. We certainly think the tone of the reply is important. We have tried to make it less aggressive. We would like the replies to letters to be shorter. Question of space is relevant. We would certainly like to give more space to letters received. In many cases you cannot hold these letters over because to print them two months or three months later is frankly too long a gap, so a lot of these letters are not published which frankly could be published. It is the practice of newspapers to edit letters coming in. For consideration at a later date, not necessarily now, we want to encourage lively exchange on the Letters Page. There is a very big problem here. Frequently letters coming in are boring. Quite frequently the case. Members must bear that in mind. Somebody said that if a member wrote in a letter to the SS putting us right we do not print those letters. That is not true. We do print letters correcting, where we think it appropriate or useful to do so. Com. Buick made point where he read the letter from SERA where he thought we had

not responded to points in that letter. We thought the tone in general was supportive. We felt that in that case it was entirely appropriate not to print a reply, yet we find that person was disappointed because we did not. So I would like the Delegate Meeting to give the Cttee some room for manoeuvre so that we do have an option to reply or not to reply.

H. Moss (Swansea). I have been pretty dismayed by the paranoia displayed by a number of members over this matter. Immediately an opponent has uttered an argument we disagree that we should pounce on it. Possibly we do need a re-think on our approach. There are other ways of dealing with opponents suggestions. It has been suggested we cannot have this lively exchange because our journal is a monthly one. I contribute to several magazines. Sometimes letters referred to articles which appeared two or three months before. I think it is a pity the SSPC get ten letters a month. It is a great pity they do not publish more. It may be the length of the replies prohibits this. It has been suggested that to do this would open the floodgates to lunatic ideas. Swansea have never suggested SSPC should not have discretion to publish replies. We suggest the SSPC should not have to reply. The safeguards are there. If the SSPC decides not to reply but would reply from a member they simply ask a member to do so and it can appear in the next issue. As far as we are concerned SSPC are exemplary. Adopting a more friendly tone more likely to get people to write in to the Standard and to come back on the replies we actually give them.

4.20 pm. Chairman reminded delegates of Reports on Pages 10 and 11 of EC Reports, Production Cttee and SS Subscribers Cttee.

COLLECTION announcement - £39.66

L. Cox E.C. Member On the SSPC Report to ADM could I refer to Item 8 of their Report and ask whether I was given this because it relates somewhat to the EC's views on this matter. Direct delegates attention to Item 8. Have delegates discussed it and come prepared to give a verdict on the innovation which Conference introduced?

Swansea Br. Swansea Br. have indeed discussed Questions and Answers page in the Standard and like we decided at Conference. We are dead against it. They were also under the impression the Q and A page would vary from month to month and not the same questions going in. We find entirely boring and repetitive. We do not see why it should be going on for six months. We are entirely against it. We have drawn up a Resolution: "That the SSPC operates six months to start as soon as possible. The situation can be reviewed at ADM."

Marcello (Bristol). Very much in favour of Q and A in the Standard and in the Report by the SSPC we find that not in favour of it and we do not know why they were not in favour of it.

Donnelly (Glasgow). I think it is a good idea to have Q and A. If SSPC have found it is a good idea the last delegate should have told us why it is not a good idea. I think it is a dreadful thing you need a three year course at University or six months membership of the Party.

Bradley (Enfield and Harringey). It is a plain statement for people who just may pick it up and they can see plainly what we stand for and also it enables the new reader to put any more difficult material in the Standard in context. It possibly makes those other articles more clear. At the back end there are old members who are dropping off and there are people who get demoralised and drop off. At the front end we have to attract new members of the Party. They come across the Standard because it attacks the ruling class, but they are not quite clear as to where we stand. They may read it two, three, four, five months and not be clear. Now this whole process of intensifying. This front end process is important if we are to expand rapidly and every aspect of our propaganda in so far as it helps people to be aware of us and to see in a very short space of time what we are about. It helps to speed up the

number of people coming in. For years the members coming in is the same as those dropping out. It is having this in the Standard that helps us to speed up this process.

S. Coleman (Islington). I want to suggest we keep this. SSPC should have given us reasons why stop it. Keep it. Could we not every month in the Standard have a column where there is a sort of a question box? We should not edit letters. Many of us have been victims of it in the capitalist press. We should encourage people to write letters to the Standard. Com. Donnelly extended it by saying Standard is dull. It is simple enough to make such a criticism. It is over the heads of far too many people. Unless people can come along to Delegate Meetings with practical ideas.

FLOOR RESOLUTION: "This ADM recommends that EC inform the SSPC in the view of the Delegate Meeting the Questions and Answers page be discontinued forthwith."

Janie P-S (SSPC). The reasons why the Cttee felt that we would like to see it discontinued are these: in a sense it is a product of something good that is happening. We get a mass of articles which are coming in and at the moment we do not have room. On balance we thought taking up the first page could be used for something better. We will continue printing Q and A if that is the view of members. There is no argument about this. If I can extend that debate about Q and A to the idea of a question box. I think that is something the Cttee would like to see, to have short question and answer which took up either topical or more general issues and we did in fact try to get some members to take this up. Some members are pathologically incapable of writing anything short! We were asking for a short article not a page article. We would like to reconsider possible to do. Does mean a certain amount of discipline not people to write such articles. In this month's Standard the full Information part of the Directory was left out. This was quite simply for reasons of space. Our view was that there was a lot of repetition on that page. It is not unattractive. It is important information Branches and Groups should be there. Aware you have addresses for London where you have several Branches. We will continue until we are instructed otherwise. Is their name necessary in that column because it does take up space? On articles, as I said before, I think we have had a lot of good articles coming in. Two points we want to make. Firstly we are desperately short of members who are able or willing to write more specialised articles about certain incidents happening in the world today. Gulf War is an example. We have not found anyone yet who is willing to write an article about the Gulf War. We could talk about several other incidents where we have been unable to find anyone prepared to do it. We would like to send out A N A P P E A L to members to keep a close watch on a particular part of the world or a particular area - trade unions or industrial policy or something on those lines - to send us regular bits on their particular area. We really ought to enlarge our scope within the Standard and look at other parts of the world. WILL YOU SEND US ARTICLES? We rely very heavily on a small handful of members who write to order for the Standard. Frankly we could not get the Standard out without those people. It is very frustrating when SSPC request a particular article, a person agrees to write it and they do not come up with the goods. We cannot ask someone else because the first person has undertaken to do so. If you cannot - phone us or send us a line. If you write to someone for an article and they do not reply you do not know where you stand. Workshop or Day Schools The Cttee is still of the opinion this would be useful. Style or presentation, standard of the articles and the future of the Standard and plan for ways in which we can improve display and circulation. We hope to get a venue in Birmingham that we could afford. We are provisionally on the original idea to hold something during Conference. Conference instructed to set aside time for workshop.

Rejection letters. It is a particularly tricky question because as I said before we are getting a lot of good articles coming in to the Standard but when we do get articles which we do not think are suitable we are presented with an article that we consider rubbish. It is very hard to write and say their article is absolute crap. We would like to send out a pro forma rejection letter. The Index. The index was prepared for the years 81 to 85 and 86 by Com. Gillespie of Glasgow Br. She did an absolutely wonderful job on that. Sent to Calverts for typesetting. We simply asked them to typeset it. Since that time we have been waiting for a go ahead from the EC to enable us to print that typeset. The index is prepared. We can have it done by next week as soon as we get the go ahead from the EC to print it. 1986 index not set up but it will be in the near future. We wanted to get 81 to 85 first. Once it is printed the SSPC intention to sell the index at a price to cover the cost of production.

FLOOR RESOLUTION: Moved by B. Johnson and H. Moss-(both Swansca): "This ADM recommends that the EC inform the SSPC that in the view of ADM the Questions and Answers page be discontinued forthwith."

H. Young spoke on "disastrously dangerous statements" which had appeared in recent Standards. Wrong on the cause of crises. Wrong on the investment of capital abroad, and wrong on the 100% profit that capitalists make.

J. Howell (Guildford). To be evaluated after six months. I want to know what the evaluation is. It has been said this speeds up the number of members coming in. Taking up valuable space that could be used for other articles. No evidence given for Q and A to be continued.

B. Johnson (Swansea). Find the present form of Q and A pretty boring and repetitive. At last Conference delegates did not want it in a repetitive form.

Votes: 9 for, 19 against. LOST

REPORTS PAGE 10

Donnelly (Glasgow). It is disturbing that we spent some time discussing one aspect of the Standard - relatively minor. SSPC have to rely on Conference resolutions and DM recommendations. What is the purpose of the SS? What is the market or potential market of the Standard? Is there an area? But here is a specific market and let's target on that sector of the market. I do not think we are being very scientific about this. The SSPC. I am not in any way criticising the writers at all. I am criticising members in the Party who want to improve but at the same time never voice or put forward any discussion in a constructive fashion. What we see the future of the Standard is. It is perhaps the most important subject confronting the Party.

Chairman: There are 14 Items altogether on this Agenda and we have twelve hours. We have had five hours today. We have seven tomorrow with our break tomorrow. We must allocate the time as fairly as possible.

H. Moss (Swansea). Point of order. If we are to be realistic the six items under 3. I do not think it is realistic to count them as six separate items. Clearly it is something that is going to require a lot of discussion. Would it not be better to deal with one of the less contentious items - 4 A or 5 B - before we close this evening, and leave 3 A to F tomorrow?

Chairman: We have an hour left. Chairman suggested 4 A and 4 B.

Buick (W London). I am a properly mandated delegate and got credentials. Would be more appropriate leave 4 B till tomorrow when a delegate in favour is here. I was not in favour at the Branch.

H. Youngs. I mentioned three points on which the SS has been fundamentally wrong and if that were not enough it is publishing Labour Party and Communist Party arguments and case. From the SS January the wages system severely limits the purchasing power of the working class ... (etc). This is

rejection letters. It is a particularly tricky question because as I said before we are getting a lot of good articles coming in to the Standard but when we do get articles which we do not think are suitable we are presented with an article that we consider rubbish. It is very hard to write and say their article is absolute crap. We would like to send out a pro forma rejection letter. The Index. The index was prepared for the years 81 to 85 and 86 by Com. Gillespie of Glasgow Br. She did an absolutely wonderful job on that. Sent to Calverts for typesetting. We simply asked them to typeset it. Since that time we have been waiting for a go ahead from the EC to enable us to print that typeset. The index is prepared. We can have it done by next week as soon as we get the go ahead from the EC to print it. 1986 index not set up but it will be in the near future. We wanted to get 81 to 85 first. Once it is printed the SSPC intention to sell the index at a price to cover the cost of production.

FLOOR RESOLUTION: Moved by B. Johnson and H. Moss (both Swansea): "This ADM recommends that the EC inform the SSPC that in the view of ADM the Questions and Answers page be discontinued forthwith."

H. Young spoke on "disastrously dangerous statements" which had appeared in recent Standards. Wrong on the cause of crises. Wrong on the investment of capital abroad, and wrong on the 100% profit that capitalists make.

J. Howell (Guildford). To be evaluated after six months. I want to know what the evaluation is. It has been said this speeds up the number of members coming in. Taking up valuable space that could be used for other articles. No evidence given for Q and A to be continued.

B. Johnson (Swansea). Find the present form of Q and A pretty boring and repetitive. At last Conference delegates did not want it in a repetitive form.

Votes: 9 for, 19 against. LOST

REPORTS PAGE 10

Donnelly (Glasgow). It is disturbing that we spent some time discussing one aspect of the Standard - relatively minor. SSPC have to rely on Conference resolutions and DM recommendations. What is the purpose of the SS? What is the market or potential market of the Standard? Is there an area? But here is a specific market and let's target on that sector of the market. I do not think we are being very scientific about this. The SSPC. I am not in any way criticising the writers at all. I am criticising members in the Party who want to improve but at the same time never voice or put forward any discussion in a constructive fashion. What we see the future of the Standard is. It is perhaps the most important subject confronting the Party.

Chairman: There are 14 Items altogether on this Agenda and we have twelve hours. We have had five hours today. We have seven tomorrow with our break tomorrow. We must allocate the time as fairly as possible.

H. Moss (Swansea). Point of order. If we are to be realistic the six items under 3. I do not think it is realistic to count them as six separate items. Clearly it is something that is going to require a lot of discussion. Would it not be better to deal with one of the less contentious items - 4 A or 5 B - before we close this evening, and leave 3 A to F tomorrow?

Chairman: We have an hour left. Chairman suggested 4 A and 4 B.

Buick (W London). I am a properly mandated delegate and got credentials. Would be more appropriate leave 4 B till tomorrow when a delegate in favour is here. I was not in favour at the Branch.

H. Youngs. I mentioned three points on which the SS has been fundamentally wrong and if that were not enough it is publishing Labour Party and Communist Party arguments and case. From the SS January the wages system severely limits the purchasing power of the working class ... (etc). This is

Rejection letters. It is a particularly tricky question because as I said before we are getting a lot of good articles coming in to the Standard but when we do get articles which we do not think are suitable we are presented with an article that we consider rubbish. It is very hard to write and say their article is absolute crap. We would like to send out a pro forma rejection letter. The Index. The index was prepared for the years 81 to 85 and 86 by Com. Gillespie of Glasgow Br. She did an absolutely wonderful job on that. Sent to Calverts for typesetting. We simply asked them to typeset it. Since that time we have been waiting for a go ahead from the EC to enable us to print that typeset. The index is prepared. We can have it done by next week as soon as we get the go ahead from the EC to print it. 1986 index not set up but it will be in the near future. We wanted to get 81 to 85 first. Once it is printed the SSPC intention to sell the index at a price to cover the cost of production.

FLOOR RESOLUTION: Moved by B. Johnson and H. Moss (both Swansea): "This ADM recommends that the EC inform the SSPC that in the view of ADM the Questions and Answers page be discontinued forthwith."

H. Young spoke on "disastrously dangerous statements" which had appeared in recent Standards. Wrong on the cause of crises. Wrong on the investment of capital abroad, and wrong on the 100% profit that capitalists make.

J. Howell (Guildford). To be evaluated after six months. I want to know what the evaluation is. It has been said this speeds up the number of members coming in. Taking up valuable space that could be used for other articles. No evidence given for Q and A to be continued.

B. Johnson (Swansea). Find the present form of Q and A pretty boring and repetitive. At last Conference delegates did not want it in a repetitive form.

Votes: 9 for, 19 against. LOST

REPORTS PAGE 10

Donnelly (Glasgow). It is disturbing that we spent some time discussing one aspect of the Standard - relatively minor. SSPC have to rely on Conference resolutions and DM recommendations. What is the purpose of the SS? What is the market or potential market of the Standard? Is there an area? But here is a specific market and let's target on that sector of the market. I do not think we are being very scientific about this. The SSPC. I am not in any way criticising the writers at all. I am criticising members in the Party who want to improve but at the same time never voice or put forward any discussion in a constructive fashion. What we see the future of the Standard is. It is perhaps the most important subject confronting the Party.

Chairman: There are 14 Items altogether on this Agenda and we have twelve hours. We have had five hours today. We have seven tomorrow with our break tomorrow. We must allocate the time as fairly as possible.

H. Moss (Swansea). Point of order. If we are to be realistic the six items under 3. I do not think it is realistic to count them as six separate items. Clearly it is something that is going to require a lot of discussion. Would it not be better to deal with one of the less contentious items - 4 A or 5 B - before we close this evening, and leave 3 A to F tomorrow?

Chairman: We have an hour left. Chairman suggested 4 A and 4 B.

Buick (W London). I am a properly mandated delegate and got credentials. Would be more appropriate leave 4 B till tomorrow when a delegate in favour is here. I was not in favour at the Branch.

H. Youngs. I mentioned three points on which the SS has been fundamentally wrong and if that were not enough it is publishing Labour Party and Communist Party arguments and case. From the SS January the wages system severely limits the purchasing power of the working class ... (etc). This is

not Marx's theory of crises and if it was it would not make it any better. Investment abroad. This is another fallacy in the Standard. In the article "Do we need unemployment" it says that unemployment is increased when capital is exported for investment abroad. This is typical Labour argument. Unemployment in Japan - 2.7% - the lowest in the world. Japan has the biggest investment abroad. SS entirely wrong about this. Last point - a ghastly mistake. A statement who professes to be writing about economics. Says 600% profit. Some people investigated and found rate of profit about 17%.

C. Begley (HO Assistant). Suggestion we move Index to the left-hand side of the Standard as otherwise can be covered up on display. We must increase circulation in the shops.

Janie P-S (SSPC). We asked Calverts to do this and they thought we would have to re-design front cover. The logo is to the left and it would upset the balance. It means slightly re-arranging the logo.

Agenda Item 4 A. Delegate from E London Br. had left.

Agenda Item 4 B.

B. Johnson (Swansea). Delegates might think question of community charge or poll tax might be presumptuous as not definitely decided it will go into law and be enacted. I am of the opinion that the Party should be forward looking on issues that have got a possibility of being enacted and we should be ready for it and be prepared to formulate an attitude in regard to certain contentious issues. As far as Party's attitude has been regarding rates and taxes it has always expressed the view that they are not a burden on the working class, which I undoubtedly go along with. However some members of the working class will undoubtedly perceive that a poll tax will be a burden and given that reception they will take every opportunity not to pay it, although this would mean under the proposals in front of Parliament it would mean they would be disenfranchised because the poll tax will be linked with the Electoral Register. When it first came up in the Standard in the August issue it did make a couple of contentious points on the economic issue. These were corrected in this month's issue. The economic points but this month's issue did not refer at all to the political points which were being made and I quote here from the August issue: "The financial cost of the poll tax might well be so high (etc.)" It is the political issue I am looking at here. What it means in effect is that this Government is trying to put a price on democracy, whether it succeeds is another thing. The Party's attitude in regard to this is that our case is linked to the poll tax and we have always contended that socialism is not for sale. Yet we have an instance here where this Government is trying to make democracy into a commodity. When this was brought up at this year's Conference through an item for discussion from Camden Br. when delegates votes should only reflect members paying dues. When this was brought up by Camden at Conference it was overwhelmingly rejected by delegates at the time. I do not think we should place ourselves in the position where we agree that such action if adopted internally would be detrimental to party democracy, yet not take issue if adopted nationally. Does such a reform mean that even socialism is up for sale? Is this going to mean that socialism becomes a commodity?

C. Slapper (Islington). On the question of rate of profit. It should be brought to members attention whilst he is right that the rate of profit is between 10 and 20% this figure of 600% was in a completely different context of course. It was referring to SHARE prices of certain specific Companies. If I had invested one million Pounds in those Companies the SHARE price of those Companies has increased by 600%. Poll Tax. Islington Br. asked us to convey that surely the Marxist category of wage labour are in fact branded as such to have a certain standard of living which is dictated by their existence of wage labour. No reforms of VAT, Income Tax,

not Marx's theory of crises and if it was it would not make it any better. Investment abroad. This is another fallacy in the Standard. In the article "Do we need unemployment" it says that unemployment is increased when capital is exported for investment abroad. This is typical Labour argument.

Unemployment in Japan - 2.7% - the lowest in the world. Japan has the biggest investment abroad. SS entirely wrong about this. Last point - a ghastly mistake. A statement who professes to be writing about economics. Says 600% profit. Some people investigated and found rate of profit about 17%.

C. Begley (HO Assistant). Suggestion we move Index to the left-hand side of the Standard as otherwise can be covered up on display. We must increase circulation in the shops.

Janie P-S (SSPC). We asked Calverts to do this and they thought we would have to re-design front cover. The logo is to the left and it would upset the balance. It means slightly re-arranging the logo.

Agenda Item 4 A. Delegate from E London Br. had left.

Agenda Item 4 B.

B. Johnson (Swansea). Delegates might think question of community charge or poll tax might be presumptuous as not definitely decided it will go into law and be enacted. I am of the opinion that the Party should be forward looking on issues that have got a possibility of being enacted and we should be ready for it and be prepared to formulate an attitude in regard to certain contentious issues. As far as Party's attitude has been regarding rates and taxes it has always expressed the view that they are not a burden on the working class, which I undoubtedly go along with. However some members of the working class will undoubtedly perceive that a poll tax will be a burden and given that reception they will take every opportunity not to pay it, although this would mean under the proposals in front of Parliament it would mean they would be disenfranchised because the poll tax will be linked with the Electoral Register. When it first came up in the Standard in the August issue it did make a couple of contentious points on the economic issue. These were corrected in this month's issue. The economic points but this month's issue did not refer at all to the political points which were being made and I quote here from the August issue: "The financial cost of the poll tax might well be so high (etc.)" It is the political issue I am looking at here. What it means in effect is that this Government is trying to put a price on democracy, whether it succeeds is another thing. The Party's attitude in regard to this is that our case is linked to the poll tax and we have always contended that socialism is not for sale. Yet we have an instance here where this Government is trying to make democracy into a commodity. When this was brought up at this year's Conference through an item for discussion from Camden Br. when delegates votes should only reflect members paying dues. When this was brought up by Camden at Conference it was overwhelmingly rejected by delegates at the time. I do not think we should place ourselves in the position where we agree that such action if adopted internally would be detrimental to party democracy, yet not take issue if adopted nationally. Does such a reform mean that even socialism is up for sale? Is this going to mean that socialism becomes a commodity?

C. Slapper (Islington). On the question of rate of profit. It should be brought to members attention whilst he is right that the rate of profit is between 10 and 20% this figure of 600% was in a completely different context of course. It was referring to SHARE prices of certain specific Companies. If I had invested one million Pounds in those Companies the SHARE price of those Companies has increased by 600%. Poll Tax. Islington Br. asked us to convey that surely the Marxist category of wage labour are in fact branded as such to have a certain standard of living which is dictated by their existence of wage labour. No reforms of VAT, Income Tax,

ot
d

Haringey

, Seaham

th,
Haringey
, NW Lond
,
e, Seaham

th,

, Seaham

can ultimately and in the long term make any real or lasting difference to the workers. Their real wages dictated by the minimum the capitalists can get away with. Clearly in the case of poll tax there will be short term effects. In the short term it will make substantial difference and some will be worse off. Some may be better off. Thirdly, one of the members thought it was also important that in relation to poll tax there is also this democracy question. It has been suggested, perhaps quite validly, that workers will try to avoid paying poll tax by effectively disenfranchising themselves. You can have a vote, or lose that vote and pay less tax.

Marcello (Bristol). We do not actually believe that there will be any lasting effect. Some workers will gain, some will lose.

A. Buick (W London). Instead of interpreting it as some Tory plot it is a misinterpretation. It is Labour Party propaganda. How this issue of being disenfranchised if they do not pay the tax? How are you going to track people down? Use the Electoral Roll. This will not work because they have other ways of tracking people down. There is National Health, Social Security number. So in fact workers who will take themselves off the Register will find themselves without a vote and without Health. People do not go on the Electoral Roll for all sorts of reasons - avoiding creditors, matrimonial. Our view is that taxes, rates are not a burden on the working class as a whole but this does not mean that workers do not pay taxes. The correction in this month's Standard says: "It is not a burden on the working class as a whole. It is not a working class issue." We do not need to get involved on one side or the other. We should drop this thing about this being a Tory plot.

Janie P-S (Yorkshire). I cannot disagree with the economic point of view being put forward on the poll tax. I do not think the original bit in the SS so far says it is a Tory plot. One of the effects of the poll tax may be some workers may decide not to vote. We now say we are coming down in favour of one or the other on this issue. I think as a political organisation we must address ourselves to things people are talking about. One of the things causing a lot of political debate at the moment is the poll tax and I think we can pick some of the arguments from the left and from the right and say that those are both fallacious arguments and there could well be negative political effects for working class people.

Preston (Eccles). I think the idea this is a Tory plot is equivalent to the virgin birth. It is not going to go through in the sense it was originally. Federation of Employers not happy about it. It will in some form be modified considerably. It is important to get it through the Lords. Ministers have said they would not have any chance of getting through. Employers and trade unions opposed to it for all sorts of reasons. It could not work.

Skelton (Central). Is not the issue simple enough? If a majority of workers understand and want socialism is a poll tax going to stop them? This is one of the biggest non-issues I have heard today. This is not an issue as far as I am concerned.

P. Lawrence (SW London). The Party in the past has always done a very useful thing. It has analysed this sort of proposition with a view to examining its effect on the working class. This is what I think we should do. It is very early now. We have to look at it in its final form. It will be subject to modification but we did have quite a long discussion on this in our Br. I think general view was the effect of this on working class would be to alter standard of living. It would alter distribution of income in favour of the wealthy. It may benefit a few higher paid workers. My case would be that you see there used to be a simple device to reduce workers wages and that was inflation. Well this Government does

not want inflation. I think looking at it in other ways to shift the income. It is a better position to make cash available for them to invest with a corresponding plus on the other side of a general reduction of wages with a view to stimulating activity. We should continue to analyse these things and their effect on the working class.

Marcello (Bournemouth). It is important to note. I do not think this is an important issue that should be brought up at this meeting. I think there seems more important things on how this Party is going to further its cause.

J. Howell (Guildford). Democracy has to grow and we should be helping it to grow. Simplify it and then when everybody needs and wants socialism they will suddenly vote for it. Democracy is not just a single entity. It is something you have more of or less of or different kinds of.

B. Johnson (Swansea). Sum up. I do not believe it is a Tory plot. It is just a matter of economic policy for this particular Government. I did say it would be modified before it reaches its legislation form. Drastic changes so far as the business community concerned because they do not want to face increases in community charges. I did not say it would become a commodity. I asked delegates: "Do they think it would become a commodity?" To me everything appertaining to capitalism is an important issue. We are here to answer everything that capitalism puts forward. There is also other possibility that we can argue with a member of the working class all night over a period of time and convince him that socialism is a good thing and it is indeed urgent. Yet if he is disenfranchised he is going to turn round and say: I agree with it but there is not much I can do about it except join your organisation but I cannot vote because I simply cannot afford it.

Chairman closed meeting at 5.50 pm.

es not
ented

d & Haringey,
ter,
ster,
side, Seaham

smouth,
ld & Haringey,
ster, NW Lond
ester,
yside, Seaham

emouth,
ster,
yside, Seaham

not want inflation. I think looking at it in other ways to shift the income. It is a better position to make cash available for them to invest with a corresponding plus on the other side of a general reduction of wages with a view to stimulating activity. We should continue to analyse these things and their effect on the working class.

Marcello (Bournemouth). It is important to note. I do not think this is an important issue that should be brought up at this meeting. I think there seems more important things on how this Party is going to further its cause.

J. Howell (Guildford). Democracy has to grow and we should be helping it to grow. Simplify it and then when everybody needs and wants socialism they will suddenly vote for it. Democracy is not just a single entity. It is something you have more or less of or different kinds of.

B. Johnson (Swansea). Sum up. I do not believe it is a Tory plot. It is just a matter of economic policy for this particular Government. I did say it would be modified before it reaches its legislation form. Drastic changes so far as the business community concerned because they do not want to face increases in community charges. I did not say it would become a commodity. I asked delegates: "Do they think it would become a commodity?" To me everything appertaining to capitalism is an important issue. We are here to answer everything that capitalism puts forward. There is also other possibility that we can argue with a member of the working class all night over a period of time and convince him that socialism is a good thing and it is indeed urgent. Yet if he is disenfranchised he is going to turn round and say: I agree with it but there is not much I can do about it except join your organisation but I cannot vote because I simply cannot afford it.

Chairman closed meeting at 5.50 pm.

es not
ented

d & Haringey,
ster,
ster,
yside, Seaham

smouth,
ld & Haringey
ster, NW Lond
ester,
yside, Seaham

emouth,
ster,
yside, Seaham

THE NEED TO CONTEST NATIONAL ELECTIONS

abolish the arm
don): This was
about the race
rty's attitude
race ideas.
opposed to raci
ington): Vari
se could deal
propaganda.
); Should em
thisers can pa
s about politi
possible. A
. There are
out trying to
ason the Par
bers pass th
indous progre
many forms o
option of th

As a political party, The Socialist Party would lack credibility if we did not put up candidates in elections. The immediate purpose of putting up candidates is to show that we are democratic and to build support for our ideas within localities where we are organised.

There is a strong case for the Party contesting local elections. The more of these that we contest, especially if our candidates are spread out across the country, thus showing that we are a nationally-organised party, the better it will be for our credibility. Local elections are relatively inexpensive to contest (there is no deposit and wards are smaller than parliamentary constituencies) and it would seem from the recent local election campaign in Swansea that such activity is very worthwhile in making the Party noticed.

In addition to local election activity (which is all that we are likely to be able to engage in between now and the end of the decade), the Party should be preparing to show itself as a credible organisation at the time of the next general election. In the last three general elections we have contested only one parliamentary constituency (Islington South and Finsbury). Of these three campaigns, the 1987 one was the best. The Party really made an impact locally, as anyone involved in the campaign will know. But, with only one parliamentary candidate standing, we were regarded by the media and by a number of workers as being too insignificant to bother about.

The Party needs to begin a national campaign of preparation for the next general election. In addition to Islington branch, which is fully committed to continued electoral activity, there should be at least one non-London branch preparing to put up a socialist candidate. Every branch in the Party should be considering the practical possibility of contesting their local constituency. The aim should be to contest between two and five constituencies in the next election, with long-term preparatory work of the kind carried out in Islington beginning as soon as possible.

To members who dismiss this proposal as being too grand (and there are even some members who would argue that the Party should reject the idea of contesting any constituency in the next election) we would say that it would be absurd for a Party, which claims that winning the vast majority of workers to understand and want socialism is a practical proposition within our lifetimes, to decide privately that standing between two and five socialist candidates in an election in the early 1990s is too optimistic a proposal to be supported. In short, if the party cannot plan now to contest less than half a dozen constituencies in four or five years time, how seriously are we taking ourselves as a movement for political change?

SWANSEA
The pur
electio
worthwh
at a Ge

The
campaign
General
resulted
much of
In th
Election
in 1974;
above is
of 27,00
per cent
having a
explanat

The r
parallel
campaign
with its
of publi
match th
importan
the tele
passive e

In loc
play a fa
canvassin
Party wil
impact wi
The expen
elections

We als
to Party
members,
about our

Just a
Socialist
taken ser

The co
regular i
one Londo
would be
help to b

In the
which in
It is true
money, but
the expens
\$3,000 in

In a Ge
to canvass
position.
Voters hel
is going t

SWANSEA BRANCH CIRCULAR TO ALL BRANCHES ON PARTY ELECTION ACTIVITY

The purpose of this circular is to try to win Party support for contesting local elections every year by branches who feel able to do so and believe it to be worthwhile, as opposed to our present practice of one branch contesting one seat at a General Election every 4-5 years.

The result, 81 votes out of 41,000, in the Islington South and Finsbury campaign at the June General Election leads us to question the wisdom of contesting General Elections at the present time. Our own local election campaign in Swansea resulted in 50 votes out of 4,800, which we think was reasonably successful and not much of a drain on Party resources.

In the 1940s and 50s the Party received substantially more votes in General Election campaigns than it has done in our last four campaigns: 118 out of 39,000 in 1974; 78 out of 50,000 in 1979; 85 out of 37,000 in 1983; and the result mentioned above in 1987. In 1945, we managed 472 votes out of 27,700, in 1953 242 votes out of 27,000, and in 1959 we even managed 899 votes out of 37,500 - an impressive 2.4 per cent of the poll. Although some of these figures may be accounted for by our having a greater number of active London members at the time, it cannot be the whole explanation.

The role of the media has steadily increased in General Election campaigns and parallel to this our vote has roughly but steadily declined. In the election campaigns of the 40s and 50s, the Party could fight elections on roughly equal terms with its political opponents. In the past, elections were often won or lost as a result of public meetings, leafleting and canvassing. These were activities which we could match the major political parties in. Today, however, these activities are less important in determining elections. The media today dominate elections, particularly the television coverage. As a result, the Socialist Party becomes swamped by a more passive electorate fed on television imagery.

In local elections, however, we are more likely to be taken seriously. The media play a far less important role in these types of elections. The activities of canvassing, leafleting and public meetings are more influential and the Socialist Party will appear to be on more equal terms with the major parties. As a result our impact will be all the greater and in percentage terms we should receive more votes. The experience of the Green Party in receiving a higher percentage vote in local elections also seems to demonstrate this.

We also think that getting so few votes in a General Election can be very damaging to Party morale. Even if a General Election campaign achieved one or two new members, we may lose some other active members who will have become disillusioned about our prospects.

Just as important, it looks very bad to non-members when they see that the Socialist Party receives such a small share of the vote. We are less likely to be taken seriously as a political force.

The contesting of local elections by more than one branch of the Party at more regular intervals than once every 4-5 years could help Party morale. Instead of one London campaign, a far higher proportion of members of the Party nationally would be involved. The excitement and enthusiasm generated by such campaigns may help to bring inactive members into activity.

In the Swansea local election campaign, we spent a little over £100 for 50 votes, which in percentage terms is far better than the Party's General Election results. It is true that we had much excellent help from the Print Committee which saved us money, but even so it was a small expenditure of finance and resources compared with the expense of a General Election campaign that seems to have cost the Party over £3,000 in 1987.

In a General Election, because of the size of the constituency, it is impossible to canvass all the electorate. However, in a local election it is a feasible proposition. In Swansea, we think that the face-to-face contact we made with many voters helped in getting our manifesto read. A leaflet put through a person's door is going to be less effective than a leaflet handed to a voter by a person who can

t
-
aringey,

Seaham

iringey,
NW London

Seaham

Seaham

SWANSEA BRANCH CIRCULAR TO ALL BRANCHES ON PARTY ELECTION ACTIVITY

The purpose of this circular is to try to win Party support for contesting local elections every year by branches who feel able to do so and believe it to be worthwhile, as opposed to our present practice of one branch contesting one seat at a General Election every 4-5 years.

The result, 81 votes out of 41,000, in the Islington South and Finsbury campaign at the June General Election leads us to question the wisdom of contesting General Elections at the present time. Our own local election campaign in Swansea resulted in 50 votes out of 4,800, which we think was reasonably successful and not much of a drain on Party resources.

In the 1940s and 50s the Party received substantially more votes in General Election campaigns than it has done in our last four campaigns: 118 out of 39,000 in 1974; 78 out of 50,000 in 1979; 85 out of 37,000 in 1983; and the result mentioned above in 1987. In 1945, we managed 472 votes out of 27,700, in 1953 242 votes out of 27,000, and in 1959 we even managed 899 votes out of 37,500 - an impressive 2.4 per cent of the poll. Although some of these figures may be accounted for by our having a greater number of active London members at the time, it cannot be the whole explanation.

The role of the media has steadily increased in General Election campaigns and parallel to this our vote has roughly but steadily declined. In the election campaigns of the 40s and 50s, the Party could fight elections on roughly equal terms with its political opponents. In the past, elections were often won or lost as a result of public meetings, leafleting and canvassing. These were activities which we could match the major political parties in. Today, however, these activities are less important in determining elections. The media today dominate elections, particularly the television coverage. As a result, the Socialist Party becomes swamped by a more passive electorate fed on television imagery.

In local elections, however, we are more likely to be taken seriously. The media play a far less important role in these types of elections. The activities of canvassing, leafleting and public meetings are more influential and the Socialist Party will appear to be on more equal terms with the major parties. As a result our impact will be all the greater and in percentage terms we should receive more votes. The experience of the Green Party in receiving a higher percentage vote in local elections also seems to demonstrate this.

We also think that getting so few votes in a General Election can be very damaging to Party morale. Even if a General Election campaign achieved one or two new members, we may lose some other active members who will have become disillusioned about our prospects.

Just as important, it looks very bad to non-members when they see that the Socialist Party receives such a small share of the vote. We are less likely to be taken seriously as a political force.

The contesting of local elections by more than one branch of the Party at more regular intervals than once every 4-5 years could help Party morale. Instead of one London campaign, a far higher proportion of members of the Party nationally would be involved. The excitement and enthusiasm generated by such campaigns may help to bring inactive members into activity.

In the Swansea local election campaign, we spent a little over £100 for 50 votes, which in percentage terms is far better than the Party's General Election results. It is true that we had much excellent help from the Print Committee which saved us money, but even so it was a small expenditure of finance and resources compared with the expense of a General Election campaign that seems to have cost the Party over £3,000 in 1987.

In a General Election, because of the size of the constituency, it is impossible to canvass all the electorate. However, in a local election it is a feasible proposition. In Swansea, we think that the face-to-face contact we made with many voters helped in getting our manifesto read. A leaflet put through a person's door is going to be less effective than a leaflet handed to a voter by a person who can

t
-
aringey,

Seaham

Iringey,
W Londo

Seaham

Seaham

b the arm

This was
the race
attitude
ideas.
d to rac-
o); Vari-
uld deal
anda.
ould em-
s can pe-
t politi-
ble. N
re are
ying to

the Part
pass th
use the
progress
orms of

of th

introduce the Party's case on the doorstep.

Finally, of great importance is the fact that it is far easier to follow up the results at a local election campaign than after a General Election. In Swansea, because of the relatively small number of electors in the ward we contested, we have been able to distribute Freepost cards to every house in the ward. The card refers to our campaign and gives the people who voted for us, and also those who did not, the chance to follow up their interest by requesting free literature, subscribing to the SS, coming to a local meeting, or joining the Party. This also gives us a chance to locate the people in the ward who have some interest in our ideas. Given the size of parliamentary constituencies, this type of follow-up campaign is far more difficult after a General Election campaign.

Already our Freepost campaign has resulted in a number of people showing an interest in joining the Party, in coming to a local meeting and in requesting Party literature.

We hope branches will discuss the issues we have raised here, both now and in conjunction with an item we are putting on the ADM agenda. With the state of our resources at present, it is surely wise to make the best of them by concentrating our election activity into a smaller area than an average parliamentary constituency. To concentrate on fighting local rather than general elections at the present is not to reduce Party activity but rather to use that activity and our other resources in a more effective way.

Swansea Branch

(Agreed at meeting of 6 July 1987)

Islington Branch Election Report 87

Here is the report of Islington Branch's General Election campaign, organised under general headings to allow easy reading.

1) Election Committee

Islington Branch had at an early stage expressed its intention to contest the election. As a result an Election Committee, consisting of five members, was set up to organise arrangements for contesting the Election. Consequently, the Branch was in the position to obtain Election Premises and organise an Election Planning Meeting shortly after the election was called.

2) Election Premises

The Election Committee obtained premises in Caledonian Rd, ideally located close to the Pub in which the Branch holds meetings. The Premises were vital to the campaign, fulfilling many functions. Not only did the public know where we could be found; but members could use the premises to coordinate activity.

3) Manifesto and Use of Freepost system

40,000 Election Manifestos were printed. Of these, 35,200 were delivered by use of the freepost system, allowing us to get the socialist message into the hands of 50 to 60,000 workers.

4) Freepost Cards

13,000 freepost cards were delivered by hand by members. 100 were returned to Head Office by persons interested in receiving an information pack about the party's ideas.

not
ed

Haringey,

Seaham

1,
Haringey,
NW London,

Seaham

Seaham

5) Leaflets, Stickers & Posters

Excellent posters were produced (three separate designs) and 1,500 were flyposted.

8,000 leaflets were distributed and 7,500 stickers were used.

6) Loudhailing

Together with its other uses during the campaign, the branch car was extremely valuable in allowing Islington to carry out numerous loudhailing sessions. This was not only a very popular activity with members but a very successful one, giving the campaign a high profile.

SUNDAY: Commenced at 10.20am.

Procedural Res:- 'We take 3a to 3f as one block' Carried 13 - 7

Item 3. Electoral Activity.

a) Islington Br. Cde. S.Coleman spoke on the contesting of all types of elections.
(Please refer to his circular on the subject.)

ROLE CALL 10.45am. 28 Delegates sitting. Branches NOT represented: Birmingham,
Edinburgh, Enfield & Haringey, Seaham.

b) & c) Camden Br. Opened up on items for discussion.

d) & f) N.W. London Br. Cde. May. opened up these items saying that "Contesting
Elections should be done on their merit."

e) Swansea Br. opening. H.Moss. (please refer to circular). Local election
campaign results were looked at, they felt it was cheaper and easier to run
the campaign than the Islington General Election campaign. This was not
meant as an attack on what Islington Br. has done. We felt that taking a
small area was more manageable. We covered 5,000 houses in the ward. It was
felt we could get round these houses to speak to the public. At this local
election they were not so much swept away as in General Election campaigns.
We were also on the same level in local election campaigns with the other
parties. The cost of running our May campaign in which we printed three
manifestos came to around £130. When the local election was fought again in
August the cost was then only around £15. This is what we call value for money,
low costs. What were not saying is the money was wasted at Islington, we
should put up candidates for General Elections. But at present we should
concentrate on Local Elections.

f) N.W. London Br. Cde. C.May opened. We should have had this report
earlier from Islington Br. (Please refer to Islington Br. Campaign report.)
We had much success back in 1945. We contested that Election in Paddington
North with much party support by members. General Elections should have far
more members making an effort throughout the party. Cde May went on to discuss
the literature and publicity which went into the campaign. All these ideas
should be a Party wide discussion and decision. At Islington Br. in the
last election they decided all the decisions. What we should have done is to
invite representatives from all the London Branches. All branches should
have been involved in the activities. The Party spent approx £3800, out of
that £2500 was sent directly to Islington, £250 was spent on stickers, and
the difference £1050 went on the Election Special. I feel this was a waste
of money, I wonder how many people actually read the supplement (Election
Special), this was given away just two days before Polling Day. Very few of
them were sold before. Comrade May read extracts from Cde Begleys report.
A comment was made that very little useful information was written in this
report. And I very much doubt that much of an impact was made in Islington
throughout their campaign, a mere 81 votes was certainly not very fulfilling.
Glasgow Br. DIS. In response to Cde May's opening. There's not quite the same
enthusiasm exists in the present political climate. Cde May made a lot of
good points. We've wasted a lot of money in the Election. But we must realize
we won't get the amount of votes that we received in 1945. The Branch is not
condemning Islington Br. in spending the money. We could have improved the
campaign. I agree that we should decide as a Party and ask other branches and
members if they have any constructive criticism and ideas.

Islington Br. Cde. S.Dowsett (candidate) In defence replied:- I would
like to point out firstly, that in previous General Elections only Islington
Branch seems to want to contest. There are disadvantages of contesting in
just one local area. But we did manage to get lots of newspaper articles and
even one T.V. company interviewed us, although this was a T.V. company from
Finland. I think that during an Election period there is far more awareness
of political ideas by the public than in Local Elections. We did use the free
post system in the General Election, and this facility is not available in
Local Elections. Other activity such as pub selling took place. The one
result we did gauge was that people are aware of us, which puts us on the
political map. As for finance, first of all the figures given are £2531.90
the total amount spent. This excludes the Election Special. But to put this
amount in perspective lets look at what money we waste every month in
printing the S.S. it is estimated around £700 to £800, sometimes we only sell

about h
compari
gets Is
their d
get man
Bournem
We shou
learnin
We did
Constru
E. Lond
conditi
than ju
time it
by memb
Electic
of the
to get
think w
on the
The res
to the
Eccles
Party c
money.
Newcast
that it
We will
scienti
activit
up more
Bristol
could b
But its
General
electio
time an
where o
Guildfo
The bra
that we
experi
get mu
effect
of vot
A real
Was th
seriou
S.W.
We fe
reasoc
Electi
is re
expe
W. L
camp
come
the
the
bra
bel
Imp
'Th
cou

SUNDAY: Commenced at 10.20am.

Procedural Res:- 'We take 3a to 3f as one block' Carried 13 - 7

Item 3. Electoral Activity.

a) Islington Br. Cde. S.Coleman spoke on the contesting of all types of elections
(Please refer to his circular on the subject.)

ROLE CALL 10.45am. 28 Delegates sitting. Branches NOT represented: Birmingham,
Edinburgh, Enfield & Haringey, Seaham.

b) & c) Camden Br. Opened up on items for discussion.

d) & f) N.W. London Br. Cde. May. opened up these items saying that "Contesting
Elections should be done on their merit."

e) Swansea Br. opening. H.Moss. (please refer to circular). Local election
campaign results were looked at, they felt it was cheaper and easier to run
the campaign than the Islington General Election campaign. This was not
meant as an attack on what Islington Br. has done. We felt that taking a
small area was more manageable. We covered 5,000 houses in the ward. It was
felt we could get round these houses to speak to the public. At this local
election they were not so much swept away as in General Election campaigns.
We were also on the same level in local election campaigns with the other
parties. The cost of running our May campaign in which we printed three
manifestos came to around £130. When the local election was fought again in
August the cost was then only around £15. This is what we call value for money,
low costs. What were not saying is the money was wasted at Islington, we
should put up candidates for General Elections. But at present we should
concentrate on Local Elections.

f) N.W. London Br. Cde. C.May opened. We should have had this report
earlier from Islington Br. (Please refer to Islington Br. Campaign report.)
We had much success back in 1945. We contested that Election in Paddington
North with much party support by members. General Elections should have far
more members making an effort throughout the party. Cde May went on to discuss
the literature and publicity which went into the campaign. All these ideas
should be a Party wide discussion and decision. At Islington Br. in the
last election they decided all the decisions. What we should have done is to
invite representatives from all the London Branches. All branches should
have been involved in the activities. The Party spent approx £3800, out of
that £2500 was sent directly to Islington, £250 was spent on stickers, and
the difference £1050 went on the Election Special. I feel this was a waste
of money, I wonder how many people actually read the supplement (Election
Special), this was given away just two days before Polling Day. Very few of
them were sold before. Comrade May read extracts from Cde Begleys report.
A comment was made that very little useful information was written in this
report. And I very much doubt that much of an impact was made in Islington
throughout their campaign, a mere 81 votes was certainly not very fulfilling.
Glasgow Br. DIS. In response to Cde May's opening. Theres not quite the same
enthusiasm exists in the present political climate. Cde May made a lot of
good points. Weve wasted a lot of money in the Election. But we must realize
we wont get the amount of votes that we received in 1945. The Branch is not
condemning Islington Br. in spending the money. We could have improved the
campaign. I agree that we should decide as a Party and ask other branches and
members if they have any constructive criticism and ideas.

Islington Br. Cde. S.Dowsett (candidate) In defence replied:- I would
like to point out firstly, that in previous General Elections only Islington
Branch seems to want to contest. There are disadvantages of contesting in
just one local area. But we did manage to get lots of newspaper articles and
even one T.V.company interviewed us, although this was a T.V. company from
Finland. I think that during an Election period there is far more awareness
of political ideas by the public than in Local Elections. We did use the free
post system in the General Election, and this facility is not available in
Local Elections. Other activity such as pub selling took place. The one
result we did gauge was that people are aware of us, which puts us on the
political map. As for finance, first of all the figures given are £2531.90
the total amount spent. This excludes the Election Special. But to put this
amount in perspective lets look at what money we waste every month in
printing the S.S. it is estimated around £700 to £800, sometimes we only sell

about half the amount produced. So £2531.90 doesn't seem a very great sum in comparison. I don't think the amount of votes we got is demoralising, what gets Islington Br. down is that we have to defend the branches actions and their decision to put up a candidate. We don't feel that just because we don't get many votes this is not an argument for not contesting elections.

Bournemouth Br. DIS. Cde. C. McColl. There is a real need to contest elections. We should also learn from our experiences. We must therefore start now in learning the lessons in a constructive manner. The efforts made were very good. We did learn a lot, but we must stand for Local Elections and General Elections. Constructive ideas and views should be used.

E. London Br. DIS. Contesting elections on merit is not always the case. The conditions are as bad now than in 1945. We contest elections for other reasons than just votes. The situation after the War was very much different, at that time it was easier to sell the S.S. Much criticism has always been expressed by members not contesting elections. We should continue to fight for General Elections. Were up against a lot of problems and one of them is the apathy of the working class. T.V. and the Media have just made it worse and harder to get our ideas across. What's £3800? if we have support and commitment. I think we will always consider this matter on merit, but we must keep our eyes on the future, we must organise to contest elections as and when required. The results may have been disappointing but let's take note and look forward to the future.

Eccles Br. DIS. We think it is essential we contest elections, it's part of the Party case to do so. It's a daft question to ask, are we getting value for money. It's a chance to talk to people about Socialism.

Newcastle Br. DIS. We hope to contest a Local Election in Newcastle, we feel that it's a building block ready for contesting a General Election campaign. We will have to plan and look at the situation and collate information in a scientific manner. Socialists should not have to be asked to take place in activity. We should be looking at the future of the Party as a whole to put up more candidates.

Bristol Br. DIS. Cost of course is a major factor in using resources and this could be carried out in a better manner. On the whole we favour local elections. But it's a mistake to stand in the way of enthusiastic members to contest General Elections. Many more branches feel it's more realistic to contest local elections. These are far more frequent and have the advantages of that less time and resources have to be ploughed into them by members. We must choose where our priorities are.

Guildford Br. DIS. We should be talking about the best ways of using the money. The branch are against contesting elections at the time being, but we agree that we should be contesting and concentrating on Local elections as an experiment. We should always consider the amount spent. I don't think we get much creditability by our results of only 81 votes, this does have an effect on the electorate and members alike. They will remember the small amount of votes cast. As for the impact, we don't know what the results really are. A realistic effort should have been put into the effect of the campaign. Was the money spent in the best possible way? will the party be taken seriously at all with such a small vote?

S.W. London Br. DIS. We are in favour of contesting Local Elections and General. We feel that the present condition of Capitalist Society makes it an important reason to contest, on that basis. Even with the 899 votes at one General Election after the War, members still felt disappointed. The only thing which is really disappointing now, is that workers don't seem to learn from their experiences.

W. London Br. DIS. No one has doubted, but complimented on the Islington Branches campaign. Our branch are either/or in favour of Local Elections. Money doesn't come in to it. At the moment $\frac{1}{3}$ of membership don't even pay their dues. And the facts have been given to us that the Election campaign has cost about the same as what we lose on the S.S for one year. I have calculated that 31 branches could contest Local Elections on the money spent at Islington. We believe if it was a more low key campaign more people have time to talk to you. Impact should be made on a local campaign. The article in the newspaper 'The People' about S. Colemans article made more impact than the election. Of course the timing was right, just during the so called silly season.

not
ed

Haringey,

, Seaham

h,
Haringey,
NW London,

Seaham

Seaham

We believe there is far more a chance in making an impact at Local Elections, Every branch should make an effort. We can get just as much out of Local elections in the way of been seen, heard and felt by the electorates and local media.

Islington Br. Wishes to contest the next local election in the area.

Parliamentary Cttee. S.Easton. DIS. We should rename the Cttee the 'Electoral Cttee' Its all very well saying our resources are diminishing. If its a question of not having enough resources we should be setting about raising money. More donations on a monthly basis should be given by members. Even if some members dont pay dues - every little bit helps. A call has been sent out to branches & members asking for nominations for a fund raising organiser. I suggest a Cttee for Electoral activity should be set up.

Cde. G. Wood. (Central Br. Sec) Non Delegate. We should be discussing it, to find out the best possible way to contest elections. We should except criticism on the question. But a far more constructive discussion is more helpful for the Party. Iam in favour of this kind of Party activity and the question of development in running campaigns. Not any of the election campaigns has created a larger membership. I suggest we use the money in the best possible way.

F. Deutz. E.C. Member. Expenditure details have now been submitted and a detailed account of the Election is now available. The figures, I was particularly interested in how much income went into the campaign, thats the sort of question we should be asking. Times are still difficult and results have not been forthwith. We should all be looking at how difficult things are, as much effort should still be made.

B. Johnson. Swansea Br. DIS. Some of the points that come to mind is 1) The conditions, amount of finance and enthusiasm, and I ask the question, what are we getting out of the Election ? :- Answer to get the Partys name known. 2) How do the working class see their material conditions ? We have to deal with a lot of these questions through our leaflets, which go into the subject of leadership and human nature. A lot of this was covered in our manifesto . We believe that contesting local election campaigns is more advantageous for the Party. Disadvantages of contesting, we are not able to concentrate on the campaign because of lack of members and only so much effort can be achieved. Mistakes were made at Islington Br. The organisation should be improved, if these mistakes go uncorrected, theres little point going into one election after another. We should use local elections to give us the ground work for General Elections, experience is therefore gained and improved upon.

Islington Br. Sum up. 3a) Cde S. Coleman. Refers to other items. Its alful to feel that the branch is on trial . I believe its better to have a discussion as at A.D.M. A number of points were made: 1) It was said, we should contest only local elections at the cost of General Elections. Criticism should be made on constructive points only. Cde Howell made the point that we should measure the response of the campaign. We have to face up to the fact that every thing we do in the Party is a failure, to the point that it doesn't completely achieve what we wish. We cant give in just because what results we get. Lets look at the present condition, Capitalism is the condition ! 1945 was a period, and a particular time when the concepts of Socialism were in the air. We are interested in the future, we can not ever recover the past.

Cde from Camden said, the media has turned it into a circus ? We should be looking at ways to get ourselves in the media. We must make our case appeal to everyone. Were a small party which challenges other larger parties. On the report, It does take time to compile. Members are hard pushed to get reports done, this is because they have other activities to carry out. Another point is that we did in fact have £2500 in the election fund. We shouldn't have to ask comrades to help or plan the election activity. We got no help from these comrades which criticise after the event. We wrote to branches and telephoned asking members to attend the planning meeting, they didn't even turn up. Glasgow Br. said that we get demoralised at the results, the problem is that we may not have a candidate in 1991 or 2. We want to contest the next General Election.

We believe there is far more a chance in making an impact at Local Elections, Every branch should make an effort. We can get just as much out of Local elections in the way of been seen, heard and felt by the electorates and local media.

Islington Br. Wishes to contest the next local election in the area. Parliamentary Cttee. S.Easton. DIS. We should rename the Cttee the 'Electoral Cttee' Its all very well saying our resources are diminishing. If its a question of not having enough resources we should be setting about raising money. More donations on a monthly basis should be given by members. Even if some members dont pay dues - every little bit helps. A call has been sent out to branches & members asking for nominations for a fund raising organiser. I suggest a Cttee for Electoral activity should be set up. Cde. G. Wood. (Central Br. Sec) Non Delegate. We should be discussing it, to find out the best possible way to contest elections. We should except criticism on the question. But a far more constructive discussion is more helpful for the Party. Iam in favour of this kind of Party activity and the question of development in running campaigns. Not any of the election campaigns has created a larger membership. I suggest we use the money in the best possible way.

P. Deutz. E.C. Member. Expenditure details have now been submitted and a detailed account of the Election is now available. The figures, I was particularly interested in how much income went into the campaign, thats the sort of question we should be asking. Times are still differcult and results have not been forthwith. We should all be looking at how differcult things are, as much effort should still be made.

B. Johnson. Swansea Br. DIS. Some of the points that come to mind is 1) The conditions, amount of finance and enthusiasm, and I ask the question, what are we getting out of the Election ? :- Answer to get the Partys name known. 2) How do the working class see their material conditions ? We have to deal with a lot of these questions through our leaflets, which go into the subject of leadership and human nature. A lot of this was covered in our manifesto . We believe that contesting local election campaigns is more advantageous for the Party. Disadvantages of contesting, we are not able to concentrate on the campaign because of lack of members and only so much effort can be achieved. Mistakes were made at Islington Br. The organisation should be improved, if these mistakes go uncorrected, theres little point going into one election after another. We should use local elections to give us the ground work for General Elections, experience is therefore gained and improved upon.

Islington Br. Sum up. 3a) Cde S. Coleman. Refers to other items. Its alful to feel that the branch is on trial . I believe its better to have a discussion as at A.D.M. A number of points were made: 1) It was said, we should contest only local elctions at the cost of General Elections. Criticism should be made on constructive points only. Cde Howell made the point that we should measure the response of the campaign. We have to face up to the fact that every thing we do in the Party is a failure, to the point that it doesn't completely achieve what we wish. We cant give in just because what results we get. Lets look at the present condition, Capitalism is the condition ! 1945 was a period, and a particular time when the concepts of Socialism were in the air. We are interested in the future, we can not ever recover the past.

Cde from Camden said, the media has turned it into a circus ? We should be looking at ways to get ourselves in the media. We must make our case appeal to everyone. Were a small party which challenges other larger parties. On the report, It does take time to compile. Members are hard pushed to get reports done, this is because they have other activities to carry out. Another point is that we did in fact have £2500 in the election fund. We shouldn't have to ask comrades to help or plan the election activity. We got no help from these comrades which criticise after the event. We wrote to branches and telephoned asking members to attend theplanning meeting, they didn't even turn up. Glasgow Br. said that we get demoralised at the results, the problem is that we may not have a candidate in 1991 or 2. We want to contest the next General Election.

Jordan Br. Winding up. The state of the Party could decline. We dont condemn Islington Br. but we believe that the best way of passing on ideas and strategic planning is through discussion. Then we ask the question should we contest. We should be challenging and building up on members enthusiasm. We should co-ordinate, and find out the best way to proceed.

Swansea Br. Winding up. Item 3 e) Advice is given by our branch on guidance, copies are available through approaching us.

J. London Br. Cde. C. May Winding up. I stress the importance about a report which arrives four months later. Why couldn't we get a report out within good time. What does this report tell us, How much literature sold ? How much canvassing ? How many houses covered ? We dont know, What publicity ? What press ? these are the questions which the Party should know. budgeting, Finance, I am not interested, nor in the votes. I believe it was planned to get a target of 500 votes, then we only got 81 ! What went wrong ? Why did it drop to 81 ? its a stupid target to estimate on getting. The Parliamentary Cttee has sent out a questionairre, most of the questions are stupid, that's not what the cttee should be doing. We could make the Partys name more widespread by challenging the system in other ways between elections. The past has a reflection on what we can do in the future. We have to look back to what happened in 1945. We got more replies through having an article in a Manchester newspaper, than what we got in the Election Special. A Guardian write up could have been a better way of getting the Partys name known. Despite the election and the work we all put in we are in the same position than when I started. We should be more cost wise and the organisation should be investigated much more widely. Planning meetings should be arranged and members should decide what should be done well before.

Procedural Res. 'Percy-Smith & Lawrence' 'That the vote be taken' AGREED

Floor Resolution:- 'B.Johnson & K.Graham' "This A.D.M. urges branches to consider directing their propaganda towards contesting local elections."
LOST 9 - 9

That branches have far more opportunity in contesting local elections than national elections. The size of wards are smaller therefore they can concentrate their propaganda and resources more effectively also it gives the basis in planning to participate in mational elections.

LUNCH. 1.15pm

Sunday Afternoon.

Running order. Items 4(a) 4(b) 5(a) + 1(a)

East London Br. Opening on Item 4(a) The voting proceedure seems to work but it is in conflict with clause 9 of S/O.

Islington Br. DIS. Are in favour of the arrangements, most other branches agree. We shared out the time and adhered to them. We hope that workshops would be intregated into conference next spring. One time block should be donated to workshops. We look forward to it been repeated throughout conferences. This should be made attractive and interesting for members to come to.

Standing Orders Cttee. DIS. You couldn't have conference running at the same time as workshops/study seminars. As for voting the S.O will gladly rearrange the agenda.

Bristol Br. Cde.Graham. We were pleasantly surprised on how we got through the business and delegates knew what was coming up. Voting should be made on each item after resolutions and amendments. This would be a better way to arrange the agenda. Workshops with discussion at Conference and A.D.M. is a good opportunity to have them specially when members are together.

W.London Br. DIS. We are in favour of the agenda for at least another 1-2 yrs and should be kept as before. Workshops for 1½ hrs are a bit short and needs more thought.

Glasgow Br. DIS. Are in favour as it stands, voting at the end is the best way to avoid any reputition. We suggest that we have workshops on a different subject each year. eg. S.S. one year, propaganda the next year ect.

, not
ited

& Har
r,
er,
le, Se,

th,
Hari
" NW

", Se,

Sea

S.W. London Br. Cde Lawrence. Workshops will have to be discussed further, we have the view that it intrudes upon Conference, so we oppose it on a democratic basis. Workshops are a good idea but to combine it with Conference agenda isn't a good time to use. Keep them and arrange them separately so not to intrude. Guildford Br. It worked well but confusion on voting. We should try workshops & see what happens, it should be seen as an experiment.

Item 4(a) DIS Cont:-

Cde Skelton (Central Br. member) Voting procedure was confusing so I decided not to fill in the voting paper. More clarification is required by S.O Cttee and an outline of what is required and what were voting on. Workshops in the past did not intrude with Conference, such times as Saturday morning or in the evening. 1½ hrs is not long enough to be worth while or of any value, practical advice and discussion could be arranged, at least three hours would be required. Bolton Br. DIS Workshops should fit in with the extension of time we have. We should use the extra half day we dont use, or it should be incorporated in lunch time and be at least two hours. Then one hour workshop separate, giving time between for members to discuss the ideas.

S. Easton (E.C. Member) Central Br. seem to have problems in voting, this the S.O. Cttee should clarify. The votes should be taken after each winding up not at the end.

P. Deutz. (E.C. Member) DIS. Every one was pleased how well conference went. There was a lot of co-operation from delegates. I see that this may not work well in the future Conferences. The restriction of speaking impaired delegates not to air all there views. I was concerned that more than one resolution should be discussed and passed at any time. Time block procedures are alright. Workshops will intrude upon Conference, so I would prefer to see a seperate time for these. Bournemouth Br. DIS. Workshops are very important. But A.D.M & Conference time should not be taken up with it. The time could be used for other Party matters.

Floor Resolution. 'C.Slapper and D.Donnelly' (Islington Br & Glasgow Br.) "That the workshops session for Conference 1988, as recommended by Conference 1987, be scheduled for two hours on the Sunday" Carried 18-2

ITEM 4 (b) HAMMERSMITH BR. (Now merged with W. London Br.)

Procedural Resolution. 'Best and Coleman' 'That 4b be pospond to last item'
AGREED

N.W. London Br. Item 5 (a) Opening. Cde H. Young.

This is a very serious misrepresentation of our case. I would like to refer you to our statement of 1976 which sums up the question. We dont know what would happen at the time, we should stick to what it says in the statement. Violence is not part of our principles.

GLASGOW Br. DIS. Violence wont arise, we cant look into the future. This question is important one if a non socialist asks it. We agree with N.W. London Br.

Procedural Resolution. 'McColl and Coleman' 'Next business' 14 - 11 carried

Item. 4(b) W. London Br. (Hammersmith) Voting Procedure. RE: Rule 26. opening Its the only democratic procedure is that every member has the right to vote. We dont know the slightest idea what those members who dont attend the branch think. Therefore we ask for a Party poll on Hammersmiths branches resolution. Central Br. voting is ludigrous. Voting strength should not be expressed by the minority of members who attend branch meetings. We should adopt this democratic procedure now. It should have been implimented years ago.

Islington Br. DIS We do not favour the issue at the time being.

Bristol Br. DIS We voted against it at Conference. But present voting arrangments are not good enough. There would be no need to hold Conference if members have voted before Conference. Conference is a unique occasion for delegates to hear other branches views before voting. This voting should take place after Conference as Hammersmith Br. (W. London Br.) suggests.

N.W. London Br. DIS. Agrees that it would be a better way to do this, but it could cause delay and a quick response is required.

S.W. London Br. We voted against it at Conference hoping for fresh information to come forward to change our minds.

WHY THE PARTY NEEDS TO PLAN STRATEGICALLY

The Party goes on from year to year with a single objective: making more socialists until the whole working class is socialist. That was the aim of members in 1904, 1934, 1964 and 1984. It should be the sole aim of the Party, but in order to be more scientific about achieving our aim we need to plan our campaign of activity strategically. What does it mean to plan strategically? It means

i) The Party needs to use the energies of members and our funds in order to concentrate upon what are democratically decided to be the most worthwhile areas of activity. This may mean targeting less, or not at all, upon other areas. Once a strategic decision has been made democratically, the EC, Party committees, branches and members should make a co-ordinated effort to implement it.

ii) For the Party as a whole to plan strategically it will be necessary for us to a) have before us an analysis of the present political situation so that we can discuss the latest developments within capitalism and adjust the emphases of our propaganda accordingly; b) have before us a report from Party committees giving frank assessments of the successes and failures of different areas of activity; c) have before us a list of proposals (from committees and branches) as to what areas of activity should be emphasised for the coming period. In the light of full discussion of (a) and (b) it will be possible to make democratic choices of emphasis arising out of (c).

In practical terms, this will mean that one part of each year's Conference should be devoted to discussing and voting upon a series of Party targets for the next year. This discussion will take place with the aid of reports on the success and failure of previous year's targets, and a report on the current political situation. (The latter point is important: as historical materialists we must be aware that different circumstances require different actions.)

The Party will be able to establish long-term targets (electoral activity, building up international links in target areas, producing a weekly publication) and short-term targets (increasing Standard sales by 10%, establishing new branches in target areas of the country, concentrating on specific newspapers/magazines to advertise in). All of these targets will be set in the knowledge that, just like socialism itself, we cannot even begin to achieve them without the conscious participation of members. Likewise, all will be carried out in the knowledge that we shall discuss the success or failure of the targets at the next Conference.

We can think of three objections to the proposal to plan strategically. Firstly, it may be argued that this is what the Party does already. This proposal is simply a way of making more complicated what the Party does

not
ited
A Haringey,
r,
er,
de, Seaham
uth,
A Haringey,
r,
e, NW London,
r,
e, Seaham
th,
B, Seaham

very well. On the contrary, this proposal is a way of preventing the Party from wasting time making random decisions about organisation and propaganda at an EC, committee and conference level - decisions which often contradict one another and do not involve an overall plan of what the Party should be doing. It is true that the Party does already make planning policies, but these tend to be unscientific. For them to be scientific plans need to be devised in the light of the present historical conditions, in the light of knowledge about success or failure in the past, and in the light of a clear choice of other policy decisions available.

Secondly, it might be argued that by having a strategic plan the Party's activity will become too rigidly organised, not allowing for autonomy and flexibility. This is not so: it will still be quite possible for individual branches and members to work away on their own projects, regardless of national priorities. A Party strategic plan would involve as many (possibly more) areas of activity as in the past, the difference being that those activities will be targeted priorities which have been determined democratically and will be fully reported on to the next Conference.

Thirdly, it might be argued that we are doing well enough without planning our activities strategically. The Party is only doing well enough now if it does not aim to become a major force in politics. What is needed is for us to show that we are serious about our ultimatism (world socialism) by establishing clear and verifiable long and short-term targets.

Conferences have traditionally concentrated too much on reviewing (and recriminating about) the past. The next Conference should be the first one to plan a strategy for the year ahead. This will make Conference a more positive and dynamic occasion. Members will be able to go away from Conference knowing that they have really decided something and that we have some practical targets to implement, and reassess at ADM and the following Conference. Finally, such a strategy will counter the tendency within the Party to sometimes see the coming of socialism as a process of inevitable evolution within which the revolutionary party has little to do except wait for the moment to come. Strategic planning is based upon the fundamental Marxist principle that if we expect history to be different we must go out and consciously make it.

very well. On the contrary, this proposal is a way of preventing the Party from wasting time making random decisions about organisation and propaganda at an EC, committee and conference level - decisions which often contradict one another and do not involve an overall plan of what the Party should be doing. It is true that the Party does already make planning policies, but these tend to be unsystematic. For them to be scientific plans need to be devised in the light of the present historical conditions, in the light of knowledge about success or failure in the past, and in the light of a clear choice of other policy decisions available.

Secondly, it might be argued that by having a strategic plan the Party's activity will become too rigidly organised, not allowing for autonomy and flexibility. This is not so: it will still be quite possible for individual branches and members to work away on their own projects, regardless of national priorities. A Party strategic plan would involve as many (possibly more) areas of activity as in the past, the difference being that those activities will be targeted priorities which have been determined democratically and will be fully reported on to the next Conference.

Thirdly, it might be argued that we are doing well enough without planning our activities strategically. The Party is only doing well enough now if it does not aim to become a major force in politics. What is needed is for us to show that we are serious about our ultimate aim (world socialism) by establishing clear and verifiable long and short-term targets.

Conferences have traditionally concentrated too much on reviewing (and recriminating about) the past. The next Conference should be the first one to plan a strategy for the year ahead. This will make Conference a more positive and dynamic occasion. Members will be able to go away from Conference knowing that they have really decided something and that we have some practical targets to implement, and assess at ADM and the following Conference. Finally, such a strategy will counter the tendency within the Party to sometimes see the coming of socialism as a process of inevitable evolution within which the revolutionary party has little to do except wait for the moment to come. Strategic planning is based upon the fundamental Marxist principle that if we expect history to be different we must go out and consciously make it.

The struct
favour of
a discussi

ROLE CALL

Bolton Br
Cde Cox. I
of what h
at the ti
which loo
consider
Cde E. Gr
arguement
particula
Just beca
involved
voting.

Cde S. Ea
I dont be
of quoter
as it is,
Cde. Skel
as a whol
postal vo
at Confer
represent
W. London
feels tha
members w
E.C.. We
Branch sh

Item 1(a)
(Please r
Socialist
to our pr
for examp
the situa
to have a
telling t
members
The only
eliminat
three bi
members
and gro
the way
out ho
condit
currer
see a
and l
of re
enth
sugg
Bour
shou
runr
Bris
Ctt
Str
act
co

The structure of the party is based on branch representation. We are not in favour of Bristol Branches ideas. Present procedure is alright, Conference is a discussion place and everything centres on the branch.

ROLE CALL 3.00pm.

Bolton Branch. DIS. Are in favour of Hammermith (W.London Br.) Res.
Cde Cox. E.C.Member. Cde Lawrence is quite right when n' exposes the short coming of what he says. The only members who voted for it was the members at the branch at the time. You should restrict voting to those members present at the meeting which look at the agenda. The absent members ideas could be either way. We should consider and attempt to put this into action.

Cde E. Grant. E.C. Member. The Branch is the basic unit of the Party. Much of the argument has been so far on the votes of members which attend the branch on that particular night. Democratically in the Party is not always going to be total. Just because members can't attend some meetings, it doesn't mean that they aren't involved in Branch life. Even those who can't attend should be involved in Party voting.

Cde S. Easton. E.C. Member. DIS. I am also not in favour of one night democracy. I don't believe the way its done at the moment is correct. There are advantages of quoter voting procedure where we have a special Branch meeting. The system as it is, is not entirely unfair.

Cde. Skelton (Non Delegate.) The votes from members should represent the Party as a whole. There are many reasons why Party members don't attend meetings. A postal vote could be sent to the Branch, this could be included in Branch voting at Conference and A.D.M.. I feel that at present its very unfair, a much more representative procedure must be implemented.

W. London Branch. Winding up. No system is perfect or democratic, this Branch feels that this system is fairer. A postal vote would be more democratic for those members who can't always attend meetings. A floor resolution is recommended to the E.C.. We could not agree more with the fact that the active membership of the Branch should decide what the Party should decide.

Item 1(a) Islington Branch. "Why the Party needs to plan strategically" (Please refer to Islington Br. circular) The Party claim that we are not simply Socialists but Scientific Socialists. Where we can't uphold it, is in relation to our propaganda, the aim. At the moment it is un-co-ordinated and messy activity for example our financial expenditure is wasteful. The bad news is that we are in the situation we are in now! We are not equipped with any strategy. We must start to have a clear aim, apart from Socialism, lots of questions arise. We are not telling members to do anything specific. We have to discuss how to get more members in the Party. We have to establish short term targets through discussion. The only way to achieve it is with collective democratic discussions. This would eliminate some of the useless activities we have been carrying out. The Party has three basic things to do. 1) We have a set of clearly faced target options for members to consider, expenditure, concentration of electoral activity, journals and groups. These would be presented by Cttees as a priority. 2) Report back on the way we went about achieving them or not, analysing the results and finding out how much nearer we are to the targets set. 3) Documenting the present conditions of Capitalism any given time. What we need is a Party wide debate on current Capitalist state. Study trends in the class struggle. We would like to see a part of Conference discussing these matters on how things are going locally and looking into the world situation. This would transform Conference to a time of reviewing where we are and what could be done, sharing our experience, uniting enthusiasm and preparing it into scientific propaganda, these are serious suggestions.

Bournemouth Branch. DIS. We should be coming forward with ideas now! The Party should be far more united in its activity, for example we have two Branches running within two miles of each other working separately.

Bristol Branch DIS. The activity is far to random, the Planning and Strategy Cttee was set up after last Conference to look into the matter.

Strategy and Planning Cttee. DIS. Far more co-ordination is required for Party activity. We shall be sending plans to Branches, putting ideas down in a far more concrete form.

lism will abolish
D 18 - 6
(S.W. London):
is talking about
and the Party's
propagating race
lists are oppose
n (for Islington:
ation classes co
prove our propag
(Islington): S
ch. Sympathise
and myths abou
p wherever pos
the Party. Ti
ously about t
ect one reason
o have members
the Party bec
make tremendo
ge in as many
lowing adopt.

Guilford Branch. J.Howell. DIS. The worry we expressed is where are we going to find members for the work involved. The work involved in selling the S.S. Street sales lack creditability. We should be presenting the S.S. in shops for sale.

Cde. Young. Spoke for some time on the present political scene.

Bournemouth Branch DIS. Cont. Item 1 a)

The 1000 edition of the S.S. should be hi-lighted. We must contact the Press and T.V./ Radio etc.

Bristol Branch. Cde G.Marcelo. 1. Branches should plan strategically.

2. Branches should have an officer responsible for discovering from the Branch its long term objectives, and to timetable short term goals. 3. Branches move resolutions based upon experience obtained. By planning strategically at Branch level, we can learn by experience how to plan strategically at Party level.

BRISTOL BRANCH. Further suggestions. 1) Make a concerted effort to contact pressure groups and other organisations to introduce them to the Partys ideas. 2) Introduce financial planning, for example budgets. This could be done by a sub-committee. 3) More detailed flow of information from Party Officers, Committee and E.C. to Branches E.G. Finances and membership figures. 4) Organising local electoral activity. 5) Look at approaches to propaganda. It should be no more aggressive and confrontational than necessary, otherwise it just drives people away. Branches should think about these and similar suggestions and put forward them at Conference as resolutions if desired.

Collection £51.12

Yorkshire Branch. DIS. Like to endorse the ideas expressed at A.D.M. I would like to suggest that Cttees get together to organise in a co-ordinated meeting. The 1000 edition of the S.S. will be including the History of the S.S. etc. I shall be very happy to put together an article on this subject.

S.W. London Br. DIS. We were all disappointed at our lack of progress. Outsiders are amazed at our durability at producing pamphlets and literature, it makes our exsistance solid. We want to expand our efforts. We should be taking the arguement from here and devoloping the momentum, and keep it moving. The pamphlets and debates has expanded the ideas in a positive way. We must present a credible realistic view of Socialism.

Thanks to Comrade Frank Morgan for his excellant catering

Islington Branch. C.Slapper. DIS. Spoke on strategy and valueating information. Suggests that Branches read the Islington Br. circular and discusses it further.

Islington Branch DIS. Cde M. Chapman. Agrees with what has been expressed. More communication is required by members to express ideas and strategy. A Monthly in Party pamphlets could help in the flow of ideas between branches.

Islington Branch DIS. Cde. S. Coleman. We should grasp some of the ideas floating about and try to put them into action. Q. Why do members join ? A. They think its a good idea. Q. Why do they leave ? A. They die or get fed up. The reason for this is that they find that they are not doing anything or achieving anything. We must aim our activity at achieving something . But lets look at whats been said. One member is engageing in foolish nostalgia talk. There wern't any good old days, these are delusions and myths. He thinks Socialism is inevitable, in fact its a clearly held view. Thats not the case. Members must not maintain or persist this illusion, we should be making an intervention, putting these ideas into the heads of people. Its only socialists which will make Socialism.

Comrade J. Howell FLOOR RESOLUTION. (See further below)

Swansea Branch. DIS on floor res. Against it. Room will be taken up, extra expense and not being able to hold A.D.M. meetings here. The Print Cttee should get their priorities right, when they have gained experience they might be able to purchase another machine. People still have to wait for material to be printed.

Yorkshire Branch. DIS. Supports, but must negotiate with the S.S.P.C. and the proposes that they should meet and agree a strategy.

Bristol Branch. DIS. Its expensive, but its an investment would be recovered.

W. London Branch. DIS. I would like it in spirit, 100% in favour, but in pratice would this conflict with the E.C. and would we need further equipment ?

Guilford Branch. Comrade J. Howell (Print Cttee) in response. The machine would save money. The present machine is beginning to wear out and shall be requiring

Print Committee Report A.D..M. 1987

This will be more accurate than previous reports as we took account of consummables in stock in June 31st 1987, as we intend to do so for each report.

Our production was up slightly on the previous half year being 106,000 A4 equivalents in the form of leaflets, circulars, memos, reports, minutes, posters and reply-paid cards, for groups, branches, sub-committees and the E.C., in addition to 1,500 copies of 'Socialism as a Practical Alternative'.

Total charges to Print Committee	£ 1,705.40p.
Type setting	£ 512
Stock in hand 31.6.87	£ 642
Charges out at cost	£ 796
	£ 1,904
	£ 1,705.40p

A small profit is shown although no allowance has been made for refills, light, etc. However, the same work done by the cheapest local quick-print operator would have cost around £ 2,500 - a saving to the party of approximately £ 1,800 over the six months. Although we are producing more work than we would be prepared to buy at commercial rates. We are pleased that the E.C. has approved a budget of £ 15,600 to purchase a small computer as this will enable us to make further savings on typesetting costs.

We hope members have given serious consideration to our recommendations in the last report to purchase a larger, more up to date and 'professional' printing machine. Not only would this enable us to produce better quality work, but would halve the time for a given print run - especially important for the longer runs - and we really need a more reliable machine as the present one has a habit of 'going sick' at inappropriate moments.

Finally we would like to make a revolutionary proposal. We believe that better use would be made of Head Office if the printing equipment were installed on the ground floor. There are two options; one is to build an annexe in the back yard, and the other is to use part of the main room. Either way it would make better sense to install heavy machinery on a solid floor and to save the heavy work of carrying paper stocks up and down stairs. This will be essential in the work of the Print Committee is to be seriously expanded; in addition it would be good for the party if callers could see members at work.

The Print Committee now consists of - Phil Bentley and Nick Brunskill working from their homes on illustrations and lay-out, whilst Frank Morgan and John Howell have been joined at Head Office by Steve Dowsett and Ian Dodds.

Print Committee.
October 1987

many more parts, at a cost.

Floor Resolution. 'J. Howell and T. Kilgallon' (Guildford Br. & Newcastle Br.)

"This A.D.M. recommends that the Print Committee be authorised to buy a good quality second hand A3 size printing machine and plate maker, to be installed on the ground floor of Head Office under direction of the Premises Committee."

CARRIED 13 - 3

ITEM. Any other business.

Yorkshire Branch. Comrade Janie Percy-Smith. There's not enough women in the Party and to get them involved in Party activity, speaking, A.D.M. and Conference, writing in the S.S. etc. We need women members to put across the view. We should not be a male dominated Party. We must encourage a higher profile in the Party.

End of A.D.M. Meeting adjourned at 6.00pm.

Nomin
Order
Cred
be ap
Deleg
Branch

1. E
a) I
b) B
c) H

2. S

3.

a
b

THE SOCIALIST PARTY
of Great Britain

83rd. AUTUMN DELEGATE MEETING, 1987

To be held at Head Office, 52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4 7UN,
ON SATURDAY, 10th. OCTOBER - FROM 1.0 p.m TO 6.0 p.m
AND ON SUNDAY 11th. OCTOBER - FROM 10.0 a.m TO 6.0 p.m

AGENDA

Nominations for Chairman and Deputy Chairman should be sent to Standing Orders Committee or presented in writing at commencement of A D M . Credential Forms for Delegates are enclosed. Any number of Delegates may be appointed by a Branch, but a maximum of two only per Branch may sit as Delegates at any one time, irrespective of the number of members in that Branch (Rule 20).

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

Election of Tellers.

Arrangement by Delegates of Order in which items are to be taken.

Report of Status of A D M by Standing Orders Committee.

Report of the 84th. Executive Committee for the half-year 1st. January to 30th. June, 1987, including Reports of Party Officers and Sub-Committees.

Any matters placed before the Meeting by the E.C.

Items For Discussion.

Any Other Business.

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, PARTY OFFICERS, SUB-COMMITTEES & ADMINISTRATION :

- a) ISLINGTON BR. : "Why the Party needs to plan strategically."
- b) BRISTOL BR. : "Should the Party produce a Handbook for new members ? "
- c) HAMMERSMITH BR. (Now merged with West London Branch) : "The status of and responsibility for Election Manifestos and Statements at General and By Elections."

2. SOCIALIST STANDARD & OTHER LITERATURE :

- SWANSEA BR. : "Would not a Letters Page without editorial replies improve the appeal of the S S and be more likely to encourage letters from both non-members and members ? ".

3. ELECTORAL ACTIVITY :

- a) ISLINGTON BR. : "The need to contest National Elections."
- b) CAMDEN BR. : "The usefulness of contesting Parliamentary Elections in the present condition of the Party."
- c) CAMDEN BR. : "Do present day conditions help the Party to propagate its ideas at Parliamentary Elections ? ".
- d) NORTH WEST LONDON BR. : "The feasibility of fighting Parliamentary Elections in the present conditions."
- e) SWANSEA BR. : "Is it not the case that at the present time, the Party would get the best propaganda value from concentrating its election activity on Local not Parliamentary Elections ? ".
- f) NORTH WEST LONDON BR. : "The need for this A D M to review the 1987 Election Campaign in Islington."

(continued over)

4. ANNUAL CONFERENCES & AUTUMN DELEGATE MEETINGS :

- a) EAST LONDON BR. : "The advantages and disadvantages of the new 1987 Conference procedure - in particular, the restriction of time allocated for each Amendment To Rule / Resolution and the practice of voting for all Resolutions at the end of each Time Block."
- b) HAMMERSMITH BR. (Now merged with West London Branch) : "Democratic voting at Conference - one member, one vote (as proposed by Hammersmith Br.'s Resolution V33 at Conference 1987, viz -
- AMENDMENTS TO RULES : RULE 23 :

"Delete the whole of the last line (beginning 'when') and replace it with 'at which voting shall take place on the Final Agenda. The actual number of votes for and against each Amendment to Rule and Resolution as cast at Branch meetings shall be the vote recorded at Conference. Similarly, Central Branch members' actual votes for and against shall be recorded as cast.'

(LOST: 25 For - 28 Against)"

5. POLICY & THEORY :

- a) NORTH WEST LONDON BR. : "

Is the Party case correctly stated in the following quotation from the pamphlet 'Socialism as a practical alternative' (page 10)... In the event of a minority trying to violently disrupt the plans of the majority, socialist society would have to defend itself. Socialists are not pacifists but simply do not advocate violence unless it is absolutely necessary to defend the democratic will of the majority. Should there be any attempt on the part of an undemocratic minority to use violence to resist the abolition of capitalism, then the socialist majority will have to be prepared, as a last resort, to deal with them by using armed force (suitably reorganised on a democratic basis)...?" ? "

- b) SWANSEA BR. : "What is the Party's attitude to the proposed Community Charge (Poll Tax) ? " .

-: ANY OTHER BUSINESS :-

-: END OF AGENDA :-